

In connection with the publication of this book, the Author wishes to express his acknowledgment to Historians Prof. Dr. Z. Ivinskis and Prof. Dr. A. Sapoka, as well as to Mr. A. Pauliukonis and Mr. F. Wittlinger who willingly lent their careful collaboration

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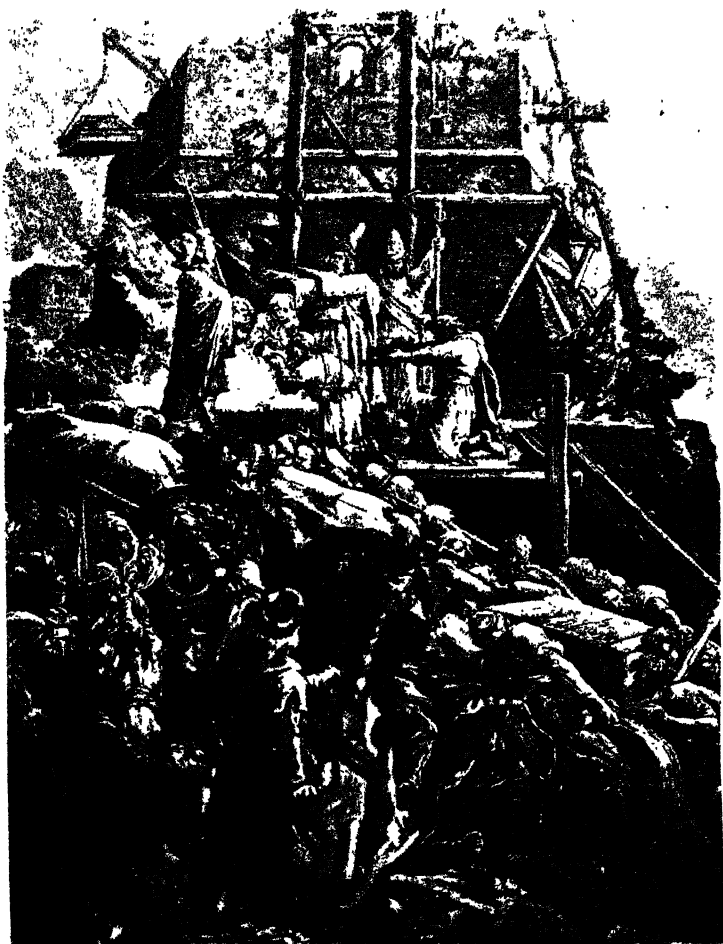
Dedicated to the Memory of my Dear Mother

CONTENTS

Legend	9
Review of History	12
Economic Conditions	26
Architecture and Monuments of Art	30
Vilnius and Lithuania	56
List of the most remarkable Edifices in the old City	60
Bibliography	62
Vilnius to day . Illustrations	63

LEGEND

About the year 1323 Gediminas the ruler of Lithuania, was out hunting one day accompanied by the nobility of his court. Many servants and beaters with large packs of hounds were in his train. Alarmed by the unusual movement, all animals of the forest, big and small, listened to the terrifying clamor that had invaded the peaceful calm of their domain, and in mortal fear, scurried into the thicket. Yet the hunters were clever and experienced, their noble horses were mettlesome, and their arrows never missed the aim. Many wild animals were killed. The most magnificent bison was bagged by the ruler himself. While pursuing this king of the Lithuanian forests, Gediminas happened to come to the top of a high mountain situated at an angle formed by the rivers Neris and Vilnelė. Delighted with the wonderful view that the mountain's peak offered, Gediminas ordered the camp pitched at this spot. At once fires were kindled for cooking and furs spread out for the night's rest. Tired by the exertions of the day, Gediminas soon was sound asleep and had a strange dream. It seemed to him he beheld an iron wolf standing on the top of this mountain uttering such piercing howls as though hundreds of wolves were simultaneously raising their voices. In the morning, Gediminas told his courtiers about this dream but they were unable to explain it. Then he sent for the High Priest (*Krivių Krivaitis*) of the near-by sanctuary of



Perkūnas the Thunderer who attentively listened to the King's narration of the dream, then profoundly bowing and stroking his long white beard spoke as follows:

— Sire, the iron wolf signifies a large and mighty city, the howling means the clamor that will arise from it reaching far beyond the country's borders and proclaiming through long centuries the glory of Lithuania.

Well pleased with the interpretation of his dream, Gediminas after his return to Kernavė, his residence, summoned many craftsmen ordering them to erect a strong castle on the top of that mountain. When the castle was completed, he shifted his residence there, by this move giving the signal for the construction of the new capital of his country.

This is as far as the legend goes about the foundation of Vilnius.



Opposite:

Painted by Andriolli, 19th. Cent.

Gediminas (on Horse-back) inspects the building of the Upper Castle. The Head-priest „Krivius Krivaitis“ is seen benedicting the Construction

REVIEW OF HISTORY

From information derived from historic sources however, it may be maintained that the foundation of Vilnius (*Wilna, Wilno*)¹⁾ occurred at a much earlier date. The first historic reports of Vilnius mention the town already in 1323, when Grand Duke Gediminas (1316—1341) issued from the city his invitations to craftsmen and traders of Western Europe. As ruler of a pagan country, Gediminas promised them freedom of trade and freedom of religion in addition to other privileges. The same year, he addressed from Vilnius a letter to Pope John XXII, complaining about the Teutonic Order of Knights' invasion of his country. He declared himself disposed to become a Christian and asked the Pope for his support against the Order. Two more letters of Gediminas have come unto our days directed to the Franciscan and the Dominican Friars in Saxony informing them of the fact that churches were built at his town of Vilnius (*In civitate nostra regia Vilna...*) and at Naugardukas (*Nowogródek*), and requesting them to send monks there.

The favorable geographic and political situation of the town and the growth of the Lithuanian State during the Middle Ages were the best prerequisite for a rapid and favourable development of her capital city. Being at the intersection of the most important roads that link the West and the North-East, Vilnius greatly attracted throughout the centuries the two widely diverging civilizations of the Latin and Byzantine worlds. Moreover, being the capital of Lithuania, Vilnius became the center of the political and cultural life of the whole country. It even grew in importance when, in 1387, Lithuania accepted christianity much to the annoyance of the Order of St. Mary's Teutonic Knights and the Livonian Brothers of the Sword (*Fratres Militiae Christi*).

¹⁾ In parentheses are the German or Slavic names usually found on maps

Russia, Lithuania's eastern neighbor, had not yet been organized as a unitary state; she led her own life within the Byzantine sphere of civilization.

Since the days of King Mindaugas (1230—1263, and Grand Duke Gediminas, Vilnius as well as the whole of Lithuania had made rapid progress. Today, it can be stated without exaggeration that at that time, Lithuania constituted the only barrier against the onset of the Slav-Tatar inundation as well as against the Germanic thrust towards the North East.

Considering these circumstances, the name of Vilnius embodies the European history of that time. Hardly one hundred years after the legendary foundation of the city, Vilnius had grown to be the biggest and most influential capital of Eastern Europe. The borders of Lithuania extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and it is only natural that Vilnius, being the capital of the vast and powerful newly organized state, developed by leaps and bounds.

In 1387, Vilnius was granted the Magdeburg city-freedom. The duty on cereals, furs, wines, etc. were no longer to flow into the Grand Duke's privy purse, but to go to the benefit of the treasury of the town.

On various occasions the town was sieged by the Teutonic Knights of St. Mary. A particularly well known siege occurred in 1392, when the Teutonic Knights led by Magister Conrad Wallenrod and supported by Lord Derby, the later King Henry the VIth of England, again attacked Vilnius. Due to the fact that it had not yet been surrounded by town walls (construction of its walls was started only in 1503), the sieges caused heavy damages. At that time the Castle was the only fortified section of the town.

Particularly striking was the increasing importance of Vilnius under the reign of Vytautas the Great (1392—1430). He invited craftsmen of all Western European countries to his state and initiated brisk commercial relations with the towns of the German Hanseatic League, as well as with the Scandinavian countries and the occupied Russian territories. Subsequently an important trade route developed through Poland and Bohemia which led to Austria and Hungary. These commercial connections gained considerable importance when the Turks, after 1453, blocked the ancient trade routes to Asia Minor and as a result, the old commercial centers on the Mediterranean coast, lost their previous dominant position.

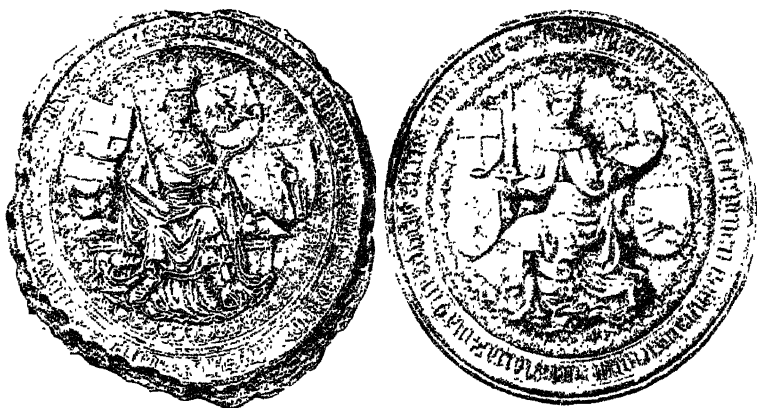
In 1432, Grand Duke Zigmantas Keistutaitis (1432—1440) granted new privileges to the town Vilnius, the Municipality became now independent from the Grand Duke's officials, and obtained exemption from customs, and also the right of free trading. On Vilnius was moreover bestowed the right of weighing the goods on arrival and of levying duties on them. These privileges were affirmed and even increased in 1441 by Grand Duke Kasimieras (1440—1492). Twice a year international fairs were held at Vilnius, and merchants from all over Europe used to flock to these occasions. During the XVth and the XVIth centuries, Vilnius showed extraordinary progress and was adorned with magnificent buildings.

Of essential importance to the cultural life of Vilnius was the arrival of the Jesuits in 1569 (cf. chapter on history of art).

The subsequent vicissitudes in the political development of Lithuania however, brought about in time a crisis to the town itself, resulting from the closer co-operation with Poland. This new situation was initiated in 1385 with the marriage of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Jogaila (founder of the so-called Jagiellonian Dynasty) to Queen Jadviga of Poland, an offspring of the famous French family of Anjou. Pursuant to the gradually crystallizing tradition, the Grand Duke of Lithuania was elected King of Poland, and this custom was continued even after the Jagiellonian Dynasty had become extinct. With this close relationship, the life of the Lithuanian State assumed a twofold rhythm, and although the independence of Lithuania had been established by treaty, further centers of public administration came into being at Cracow and at Warsaw, as well as at Vilnius. It was only owing to the weight of the Lithuanian Power within the frame of the political life of Europe, and thanks to the efforts of some Lithuanian Grand Dukes that the growth of Vilnius lasted and continued.

In 1569 the Lithuanian-Polish Union was established at Lublin.

The increasing anarchy of feudalism and the arbitrariness of the landlords (in Polish: *szlachta*), together with the degradation of the peasantry reached their peak at that time. In the circles of the landlords the diffusion of Polish and French — the fashionable languages of the aristocracy of those days — continually increased. The big landlords and the



From old Vilnius Documents. Great Seal of Vytautas the Great (1392—1430) and of Grand Duke Zigmantas Keistutaitis (1432—1440, right)

dignitaries took no care at all of the public weal, running instead into internal quarrels and discords. This tendency continued for a long time. As a result, Lithuania lost a great many of her most gifted sons, and this is why men like Tadas Kasciuska (*Tadeusz Kosciuszko*), Adomas Mickevičius (*Adam Mickiewicz*) and many other personalities, who originally were of Lithuanian descent, and during all their lifetime had striven for the common cause of Lithuania and Poland, used the Polish language and manners of expression. Their achievements benefited mostly Poland and nowadays they are labeled in all encyclopedias as outstanding Poles.

Meanwhile the right of Veto had been introduced in the Lithuano-Polish Diets and owing to this the Lithuanian Grand Duke, respectively the Polish King²⁾, was no longer able to have any salutary law passed

²⁾ The Lithuanian Grand Dukes were crowned at Vilnius, and the Polish Kings at Cracow and, later on, at Warsaw. On the death of their King, the Poles used to choose the Lithuanian Grand Duke as their ruler. After the Jagiellonian Dynasty had become extinct, the common sovereign was designated by the joint Council of Electors of the two countries. In spite of the union, each of the States retained its distinct sovereignty and had its separate army, treasury, legislation etc.

or carried out. Any landlord — no matter how big or small — had the legal power to thwart such laws. Not for long were the big neighbours of the Lithuano-Polish State inactive during the developing chaos, they soon endeavored in ever increasing measure, to obtain influence on the internal affairs of the Union by means of bribed or purchased members of Parliament. The final consequence was the complete partition of Lithuania and Poland in 1795: the two countries were occupied by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. The major part of Lithuania, comprising Vilnius, was annexed to Russia, and therewith began the first great period of occupation, which was to last for 120 years, from 1795 to 1915.

During this period, the name of Vilnius was stricken from the list of splendid and important European towns.

Important and worthy of mention in the course of this long occupation, is the transformation of the Academy of Vilnius, founded in 1579, into a University in 1803. This institute of science later contributed to a vast extent to the development of the movement for Lithuanian independence and rebirth. In its old tradition and dignity, it ranked with the finest universities in Western Europe, such as Oxford and Göttingen. Among its professors and students were many of the Lithuanian heroes, scientists, poets, etc. (Historian Simanas Daukantas, Bishop Motiejus Valančius, authors Simonas Stanevičius, Adomas Mickevičius-Mickiewicz, etc.). Although some of them wrote their works in Polish, their spirit and their research of the history of Lithuania proved an important factor in the rising of the Lithuanian movement for independence. Scientific research established that Lithuanian was the oldest and most profuse of the European tongues. Beside Lithuania's even foreign scientists began to appreciate the language and history of Lithuania, and the Lithuanian language was again recognized. It is only natural that this movement brought forth a loud echo, in particular at Vilnius, and especially in connection with the national movement in Samogytia (*Žemaitija*, Northern part of Lithuania). This at long last brought about the restoration of a free Lithuania, after Russia had been vanquished in World War I.

Likewise worthy of mention is the fact that a Polish national movement became active at Vilnius early in the 19th century.



*From old Vilnius Documents. State Seal on Document of March 27, 1590, (left)
and on Document of January 12, 1646*

After the partition in 1795, the Russian occupied territory of Poland was left without a cultural center. The only academy at Cracow³⁾ was unable to meet the people's growing demand for education and found it almost beyond its capacity to cover the requirements of the district of Galicia. The cultural center of Warsaw was held by the Prussians. For this reason, as well as due to the traditional relations existing between Lithuania and Poland, many renowned scholars (the brothers Sniadecki, Lelevel, Slovacki etc.) and other leading men, sought and found a safe refuge at Vilnius and its university. The social conditions of that time⁴⁾, as well as the influence of Romanticism and the favorable political circumstances were propitious for the development of the Polish movement which, however, in some respects was detrimental to Vilnius and Lithuania. Given ample support by Adam Czartoryski, the Vilnius commissioner for education, and with the help of the Polish freemasons' lodge, they set out to spread the Polish language. Czartoryski, a very wealthy Polish magnate had spent his childhood days at Petrograd with Alexander, who

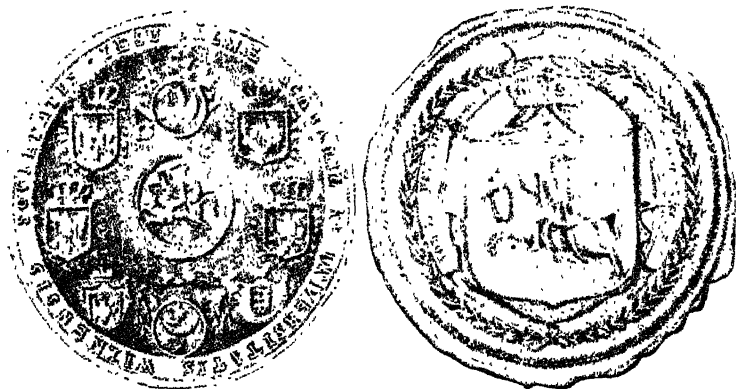
³⁾ The highschool at Warsaw was founded in 1817

⁴⁾ The bondage system only was abolished after the second insurrection which took place in 1863

... as later to become Czar Alexander the First. The Czar placed his special confidence in his former playmate which enabled him to provide favourable conditions for the propagation of the Polish language at the schools and at the university (at the latter, lectures in Polish were introduced and placed on the same level as Latin). As a result some of the lower landlords also adopted this language to some extent, but the people as a whole remained true to their old Lithuanian traditions. But the spread of the Polish language only reflected the social way of thinking and the union-idea, as well as the common trend of the romanticistic movement. The Polish movement did not concern the question as to who was to rule over both nations or who could claim Vilnius for himself. In the propagation of its aims it avoided however, the narrow-minded point of view the Poles are taking in our days⁵⁾. The Lithuanian-Polish movement was founded on the historical fate of both nations and their desire for freedom: it was based on the common goal of independence from Russia. Adomas Mickevičius, a Vilnius University student, whom the Poles consider their greatest poet, certainly knew what he meant to impart when he exclaimed: „Lithuania, my country, my fatherland! Only those will ever understand you who had to leave you behind, for you mean life and health to me ...“

In spite of the favorable conditions prevailing at that time for the polonization of Vilnius, the statistics, collected prior to 1861, show that of 136 710 inhabitants living in the town and county of Vilnius 60,7% were Lithuanians, 34,5% Poles, 3,5% White Russians and 1,3% Russians. These figures, however, do not give the correct number of Poles as can be established by study and examination of the statistical records of the existing population groups (the ruling class of the big landlords, owners of medium-sized estates, small landowners, and serfs). Such close examination will reveal that the polonized and the partly polonized group (adherents to the union-idea) could lay claim to 0,5% big landlords and 9,4% owners of medium-sized estates. Accordingly, the 34,5% stated for the Poles was arrived at by including in this figure a portion of the smaller landowners who, in following the custom of that time, had learned the Polish language, and a great num-

⁵⁾ W. Wielhorski, Doc. Dr.: „Polska a Litwa“, London 1947.



Great Seal of the Academy of Vilnius (founded 1579) and of the Supreme Lithuanian School Board reformed 1781; right)

ber of Lithuanian Jews. Polish settlers and scientists taking up residence at Vilnius also were included in the indicated percentage. On the other hand, the statistical figures were not computed in accordance with the principle of nationalities but solely on the basis of whether the landlord had any knowledge of the Polish language.

The Russian attempts to russianize Vilnius and the surrounding country also failed because of the shortage of teachers and efficient leaders, capable of carrying out such a program. It was only after the best Lithuanians had been hanged or deported to Siberia and many others had fled abroad after the collapse of the revolts of 1831 and 1863, that the Russians gained a firmer footing in Lithuania.

A quite special epoch seemed to dawn for Vilnius in 1812, when Napoleon with his Great Army entered the city on June 28th, carrying the call for liberty with his ulterior penetration into Russia. At Vilnius the able-bodied men thronged to take up arms, glowing with eagerness to fight the Muscovite subjugators. But Napoleon's plans were illfated: five months later, on November 23rd, he hurried back through Vilnius, accompanied but by two of his henchmen; he stayed there hardly

for twenty minutes, and then hastened onward via Kaunas and Prussia to Paris. Shortly afterwards the Great Army flowed back, beaten, starving and half-frozen. At Vilnius, robbery and plundering on the part of the demoralized soldiery became frequent. The hospitals, churches, and cloisters were crowded with wounded and dying warriors. The failure of the Napoleonic march had annihilated the budding independence of Lithuania. On November 28th, 1812, Vilnius was once again occupied by Russian troops.

Under the new occupation Vilnius could take fresh breath only in cultural respect, and the center of this tendency was the University. But even this situation was not destined to last long, because after the Lithuanian-Polish revolt of 1831, a severe persecution started. Churches, cloisters, schools and other places of education were closed, many leading personalities were deported to Siberia, and finally, in 1832, the University was shut, with the exception only of the Faculties of Medicine and Theology. The latter was afterwards changed into an Academy of Theology. In 1842, the Faculty of Medicine was likewise abolished and the whole property of the University, including the rich library⁶⁾, was removed to the University of Kiev. In the same year, the Academy of Theology was transferred to St. Petersburg, the present Leningrad.

The first revolt was followed by a second more ill-fated one in 1863, henceforth, condemning Vilnius to a quiet, dreaming and forgotten provincial town of Russia.

Shortly afterwards, in 1865, a ban of the press was pronounced, which lasted until 1904. Not only the printing of Lithuanian books and newspapers was prohibited, even reading Lithuanian literature was forbidden and punished. Many Lithuanians prominent in public life had to secretly cross the border, fleeing from the Czaristic persecution, to seek a safe refuge. Most of them found refuge in the United States. Thus came into being, in that great free country, a Lithuanian colony, which by now has grown to almost one million souls, and a national, independent press. In Prussian Lithuania, Lithuanian pamphlets and books were printed; they were subsequently smuggled into the Russian-occupied part of the country, where volunteers took care of their

⁶⁾ Today, the library of the Vilnius University comprises 350 000 volumes.

distribution. Since the secret printing places in Prussia were very far away from Vilnius, the Russian influence was more intense there, but immediately after the freedom of the press had been regained in 1904, Vilnius once again became a center where aspirations for a national rebirth developed. On December 4-6, 1905, the Great Lithuanian Congress convened at Vilnius, 2000 representatives took part. The Congress demanded full autonomy for Lithuania. Failing to achieve the goal, the Lithuanian movement for independence received however, fresh impulse from these efforts.

At Vilnius, the first Lithuanian newspapers were published (*Vilniaus žinios*, *Viltis*, etc.), and in 1907, a Lithuanian Society of Sciences was promoted. The same year saw the Lithuanian Society of Fine Arts called into life (M. K. Čiurlionis, A. Varnas, etc.; every year, this society has staged most successful exhibitions of Lithuanian Art). National life was enjoying a splendid revival.

Then came World War I, and, in 1915, Vilnius was occupied by German troops. On September 18-23, 1917, a National Conference was held at Vilnius, which elected a Lithuanian Council of twenty members who were to take care of the national interests. In its session of February 16th, 1918, the Lithuanian Council at Vilnius proclaimed to the world the reestablishment of Lithuania as an independent nation.

After the longlasting and oppressing period of occupation, Vilnius, the ancient capital of the country, regained its liberty, but the country, devastated and exploited during the war, was still weak and facing further threats from her neighbors, while organization of a Lithuanian army was only in its initial stage. On January 5th, 1919, Vilnius was taken by the Bolsheviks, who ravaged it for 105 days. In April of the same year, the town was taken by the Poles, who were at war with Russia for the defense of their independence. On July 14th, 1920, the Bolsheviks came back once more. Giving way to this new attack, the Lithuanian Government had temporarily moved to Kaunas (*Kowno*), from where the reconstruction of the new-born State was started. In this time of national emergency and calamity, Lithuanians at home and abroad, particularly in the United States, joined forces in supporting with all available means the newly established state in its struggle to retain its independence.

[illegible]

Lietuvos Taryba, vienintelė lietuvių tautos atstovybė, remdama pripažintąją tautų apsisprendimo teisę ir lietuvių Vilniaus konferencijos nutarimų rugpjūčio mėn. 18-23 d. 1917 metais, skelbia atstatanti nepriklausomą demokratiniiais pamatais sutvarkytą Lietuvos valstybę su sostine Vilniuje ir ta valstybę atskirianti nuo visų valstybinių ryšių, kurie yra buvę su kitomis tautomis.

Lietuvos Taryba pranešdama apie tai
vyriausybei, prašo pripažinti nepriklausomą Lietuvos valstybę.

[illegible]

12

In the Peace Treaty concluded with Soviet-Russia in 1920, the Bolsheviks had pledged themselves to hand Vilnius back to Lithuania. They did so on August 27th, 1920, the Lithuanian army on that day assuming again the task of protecting the town. But this arrangement did not mean the end of adversities for Lithuania and her capital: on October 9th, 1920, the Poles, disregarding the boundary agreement of Suwalkai (*Suwalki*) signed but two days prior, took the town by surprise, occupying it and surroundings⁷). The blow was carried out by the allegedly „insurrectionist“ general Zeligowski. The Polish government planned to annex the whole of Lithuania but was prevented from doing so by the Military Mission of the League of Nations which intervened on the spot, ordering the cessation of hostilities, and fixing a temporary demarcation-line.

<p>LIETUVIŲ DELEGACIJA:</p> <p><i>Gen. Leut. plk. Włoch.</i> <i>Pranas Radvila</i> <i>Valdemaras Čičauskis,</i> <i>Antanas Braška</i> <i>Major. Šimėnas</i></p>	<p>LENKŲ DELEGACIJA:</p> <p><i>M Mackiewicz</i> <i>Łuski</i></p>
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Signatures to the Suwalkai (Suwalki) Treaty, concluded on October 7th, 1920, between Lithuania and Poland

Still intent on annexing the territory in question, the Poles tried to cover their act of arbitrariness with a cloak of apparent legality. In pursuance of its plans the Warsaw government improvised in 1922 a Diet which decreed the annexation to Poland of a strip of Lithuanian soil named by them „Central Lithuania“ (in Polish: *Litwa Środkowa*). In judging this act, the fact must not be overlooked that the real owners of the region, the Lithuanians, assisted by the Jews, did not intervene in the Diet (on February 20th, 1922).

⁷) Lithuania lost a total of 12 000 sq. miles, housing a population of more than 1 000 000.

At Geneva, the Commission of the League of Nations motioned to settle the border dispute in accordance with the two awards proposed by Mr. Hymans, then Belgian Foreign Minister, but both parties involved rejected this decision. In 1923, the Conference of Ambassadors in which Polish influence was strongly felt as a result of the manufactured decision of the so-called *Litwa Srodkowa* Assembly, recognized the *status quo* which was decidedly in favor of Poland (on March 15th, 1923).

In 1927, Lithuania again submitted her claims to Vilnius to the League of Nations but her arguments did not meet with approval. Four years later, in 1931, the issue was brought before the International Court of Arbitration at the Hague where even the Polish judge acknowledged the justification of the Lithuanian claims. On this occasion the question was discussed as quoted:

"Do under prevailing conditions the present international agreements place Lithuania under the obligation — and if so, on which conditions — to take necessary measures to open to transit or to certain transit categories the railroad line Lentvarava — Kaicedorys?" (connecting the occupied territory of Vilnius with Lithuania).

In its session of October 15th, 1931, the International Court of Arbitration decided the issue unanimously in favor of Lithuania.

The Polish policy however, unflinchingly continued in all its obstinacy, employing the most cunning means to make Vilnius a Polish town.

The conflict, as a result of which the provisional boundary was closed and diplomatic relations between the two interested nations severed, lasted until 1938, when the Polish government enforced the resumption of diplomatic relations by means of an ultimatum. But already on October 19th, 1939, when Germany and Soviet-Russia occupied and partitioned the Polish Republic, Vilnius was finally restituted to Lithuania, pursuant to the already mentioned border-agreement of 1920 with Soviet-Russia.

Looking back at this period one may feel justified to state that the historic relations between Lithuania and Poland, which lasted for over 500 years, were severed of a sudden not because the strong bridge between Vilnius and Warsaw was broken, but because Vilnius, the capital and

source of life of Lithuania, had been torn away from that country. It should not be difficult, however, to restore the old and good relations between the two neighbors: it would suffice to turn over a new leaf in the files entitled "Vilnius".

Owing to the vicissitudes of World War II, Vilnius has since become the Capital City of the 16th Federated Soviet Republic, the territory of which is — with a few exceptions—⁸⁾ identical with that of the former Lithuanian State.



*Vignette taken from Title Page of the 3rd Edition of the Lithuanian Book of Laws
(Lietuvos Statutas) published in 1588 at Vilnius*

⁸⁾ A small strip of land alongside the border in the Vilnius district and Prussian Lithuania are still excluded from the new set-up.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

It is not only in a historical sense that Vilnius forms an integral part of Lithuania, but also economically it has been an inseparable part of the country. The relation between town and country was manifested during the various occupations of Vilnius. The occupation by the Russians resulted in the decline of Vilnius to the rank of a forgotten and vitality-lacking provincial town, and at the time of the Polish rule, it meant only a severe burden for the Polish budget. When after World War I public, economic, and cultural life in Poland began to prosper anew, causing Polish industrial, agricultural, and educational affairs to make rapid progress, life in Vilnius remained the same as before. (See remark in the official Polish guide-book "*Guide illustré de la Pologne*" by Dr. M. Orłowicz Warsaw, 1927: "The recent quarters of the town are badly built and without style. The old town presents a dirty aspect, and Vilnius therefore is by far inferior to the other important towns in Poland (?) in neatness and orderliness.")

Vilnius however, saw a revival of its prosperous development exclusively in the restitution of the old close connection with the economic life of the Lithuanian mother country. The vast expanse of forests and the bad quality of agricultural soil around Vilnius was not sufficiently productive to provide for its population, and since there are no riches below the surface which might be exploited, Vilnius was dependent on the surplus of the fertile agricultural areas in North-Western Lithuania. On the other hand, the character of the industries of the Vilnius territory

called for interdependence and harmonious coordination with the Lithuanian economy, in order to restore prosperous economic conditions. Industries dealing with building materials and lumber must be mentioned here as most important, building materials being especially favored by the conditions prevalent in this area.

The enormous extent of forests in this territory and in its hinterland, in the Soviet-Union, offers outstanding opportunities for the development of this industry and for the transportation of lumber

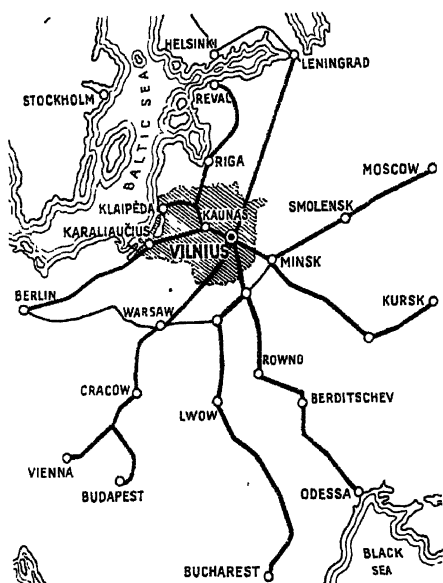
because the near-by rivers provide fine facilities therefor. A future reorganization of economic life in North-Eastern Europe will assign an important part to the industries handling lumber and building materials produced in this region.

The best chances are also open to the industries of paper and glass, which can boast of a long tradition (the first paper mill at Vilnius was founded in 1525 and the first glass factory in 1547).

The oldest and most renowned industry of Vilnius concerns itself with the processing of skins and furs, and is in keen competition with that of Leipzig but also holds a leading position in all Europe. Vilnius fur traders have been shipping unusual quantities of furs of various kinds to the European markets. The raw hides processed at Vilnius



*Pulpit of ingenious Design in St. Casimir's Chapel
made by Vilnius Craftsmen in the 17th Century*



Vilnius as the most important Junction in North-Eastern Europe

factories were procured not only from the Lithuanian forests but also from the vast expanse of the Russian and Polish hinterland. These furs have always enjoyed a good reputation.

Vilnius craftsmen may be found in many places, this fact testifying to the large number and size of the guilds of craftsmen set up at Vilnius already centuries ago, as there are the guilds of the goldsmiths, the watchmakers, printers, bookbinders, furriers, shoemakers, hatmakers and many others.

Having achieved quite a good reputation already

in the XVth century, the guild of the goldsmiths has been a particular witness to the prosperous progress made by the town.

Far famed for its fine accomplishments is also the mint founded in the XVth century by Grand Duke Aleksandras.

An important part in the development of the economic life of Vilnius was played by the Jewish craftsmen and traders who followed a call by Vytautas the Great. The Jewish community grew larger under Zigmantas II when, following their persecution in the Czech lands, the Jews found a refuge especially at Vilnius. At that time the converted Jew Abraomas Juozapavičius even rose to the position of a State Treasurer. At all times the Jews have been active in the economic and cultural life of Vilnius. As a result, they soon were acknowledged as full-fledged citizens whose co-operation with the Lithuanians has become a tradition of long standing.

Quite some importance must be conceded also to the weaving industry of Vilnius and in this line especially, woven carpets were very popular, owing to their rich designs and tasteful coloring. Based upon the manysided Lithuanian folk art, this industry will doubtlessly have a very promising future notwithstanding the advanced development of the textile trades of the various European countries.

Other important industries are concerned with the manufacturing of spirit and vegetable oils, the processing of wood, etc., to which may be added the yet unknown possibilities of the chemical plants.

Its favourable location at a junction of roads and railroads, enables Vilnius to contribute from transit traffic an essential share to the public revenue: Vilnius is the starting point of important distributing lines leading to various Eastern European areas. The principal lines are: Vilnius—Karaliaučius (*Königsberg*)—Berlin; Vilnius—Warsaw—Vienna and Budapest; Vilnius—Pskov—Leningrad; Vilnius—Smolensk—Moscow; Vilnius—Kiev—Kursk; Vilnius—Berditchev—Odessa; Vilnius—Riga—Reval; Vilnius—Kaunas—Šiauliai—Klaipėda.

Vilnius has also fine possibilities of attracting tourist traffic, it is one of the Eastern European towns most endowed with artistic treasures; it has a healthy continental climate (altitude 295 ft above sea level), and beautiful surroundings dotted with a number of spas and resorts.



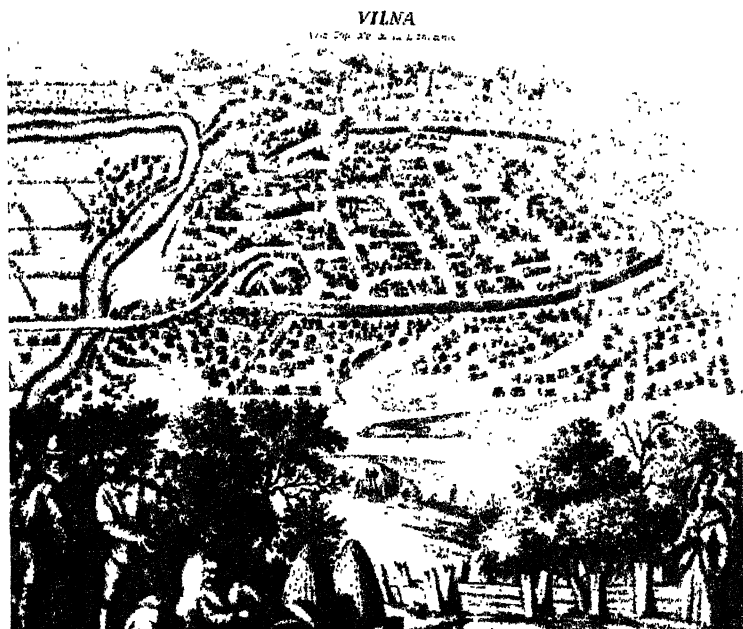
Coins dating from the Time of Grand Duke Aleksandras and Zigmantas Augustas manufactured at the State Mint of Vilnius (15th and 16th Cent.)

ARCHITECTURE AND MONUMENTS OF ART

Up to the XIIIth century, Vilnius and Lithuania led a cultural life of their own, based on old local traditions. As is still the custom in the North-European countries of today, the buildings were generally erected in wood, this type of construction giving the buildings only the chance of a short life and preventing the preservation of the oldest Lithuanian edifices.

We have no exact informations about what aspect the town of Vilnius presented in pre-Christian times, i. e. in the XIIIth and preceding centuries; it is commonly believed that the first churches erected were built of wood. In his letter, addressed to the Pope in 1391, Grand Duke Jogaila complains that the first cathedral built in 1387 had been burnt down by the Teutonic Knights, and the remaining material used for constructing a bridge across the Neris river. Construction in stone and bricks grew popular on a larger scale in Lithuania, simultaneously with the diffusion of Christendom, but information has come to us that stone and brick building had been known and used in Lithuania even before this time. This is proved by letters from former Lithuanian rulers, inviting stone-cutters (*lapicides*) and other craftsmen from Western Europe to Lithuania. Of course only strongholds and military structures were built at that epoch, but these buildings have also fallen prey to the ravages of time and war. It is only natural that the early sovereigns being heathens, were not interested in the construction of churches and monasteries.

The first detailed information on the architecture of Vilnius dates from the late XIVth and early XVth centuries. We know that the palace, or better, the Castle of Grand Duke Gediminas, on the top of the



16th Century-engraving showing Town-plan of Vilnius

mountain, was built of wood, and it was only after 1413 that it was rebuilt in masonry. This castle was fortified by three towers, between which a number of buildings spread out, as Gilbert de Lannoy reported in the description of his travels. At the foot of the mountain stood another palace, the so-called Lower Castle, also erected in wood. According to his description (1413), the town generally had wooden buildings and only a few stone churches. The Upper and the Lower Castles were fortified by stone walls (see ill. 57).

Following the custom then prevailing in Western Europe, the Lithuanian dignitaries patronized the fine arts; they had mansions built for their own use, and promoted the construction of churches and cloisters. In this manner, religious and privately owned buildings sprang up in quick succession. These monuments are cited in a description of the architecture of

Vilnius as the most important witnesses to the cultural life of that time. A period of particularly brisk building activity took place during the reign of Vytautas the Great. The Chronicles report that exceptionally sumptuous mansions of the merchants were built at this time, but unfortunately not even their ruins, including those of the magnificent "House of the Merchants" which was erected at a later date in Aurora Gate Lane, have been preserved for posterity. All these and other memorable structures of that period were destroyed in times of historical troubles.

Here mention should be made of the mysterious fate of the remains of Vytautas the Great. It is known that this ruler died on October 27th, 1430, at his summer-residence at Trakai near Vilnius. Eight days later his body was brought to Vilnius, to be entombed at the Cathedral, beneath the Archangel-Michael altar. When the cathedral caught fire in 1530, this altar was destroyed. The consort of Grand Duke Zigmantas II, Queen Bona Sforza, then had a marble tablet erected above the tomb, at the place of the altar, but this tablet was also demolished by the fire of 1610. In the XVIIth century, the Chapter of the Cathedral had planned to renew the sepulchre of Vytautas the Great, but in 1655, the town was invaded by a Muscovite army. Nevertheless, the Chapter succeeded in saving numerous treasures of art, as well as the remains of the great sovereign. Several tombs of other rulers were walled-up in the crypt, preventing them thus from falling into the hands of the ferocious enemy.

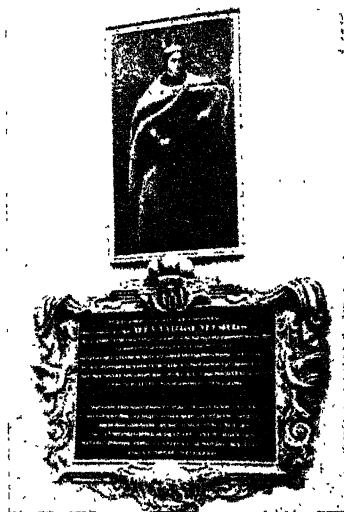
The Russian soldiers however, in a loathsome manner, broke into churches and tombs, desecrating them. The stone coffins which had not been brought to a safe place were opened by force and the bones scattered, but the Russians did not succeed in finding the coffin of Vytautas the Great nor those of the other rulers. In the course of this long-lasting war, the bishop and several members of the Chapter of the Cathedral died, taking with them into their tombs the secret concerning the last resting places of the corpses. The tombs could not be located then, nor in the XVIIIth century, when the cathedral was rebuilt. However, in 1931 when the foundation walls of the cathedral were renewed after their destruction by the flood of the Neris river, the walled-up sepulchres of Grand Duke Aleksandras and those of the two first wives of King Zigmantas Augustas, Queen Elizabeth of Habsburg and Queen Bar-



Painted in 1847 by A. Zamett

The Ruins of N. Trakai Castle near Vilnius, the Summer Residence of the Lithuanian Sovereigns, erected on the Peninsula by Grand Duke Keistutis (1345—1382). His Son Vytautas the Great built a magnificent Palace on the Island in 1406—1409

bora Radvilaitė, came to light, and it was found that the corpses were still clad in precious regal ornament. But the coffin of Vytautas the Great has never been located. Some historians contend that the tomb of this ruler was desecrated and destroyed in 1655 by plundering Russian soldiers, but according to the opinion voiced by famous historians, familiar with the history of Vilnius, the coffin of Vytautas the Great still exists. In 1938, Donatas Malinauskas, a rich patrician of Vilnius, ordered a precious silver sarcophagus to be made for embedding therein the mortal remains of the great sovereign, and one can suppose that he was informed about their hiding-place. But the sudden occupation of the town by the Poles in 1920 and the outbreak of World War II, have prevented



One of the oldest and most authentic Pictures of Vytautas the Great (left), found at Nesvyžius (Niešwież) and his Portrait in the Cathedral above Memorial Tablet erected to him in 1853 by Count E. Tiškevičius (the Portrait being of later date)

so far the search. At present, the silver sarcophagus is under the custody of the Society of Sciences at Vilnius. The well-known Lithuanian historian Prof. A. Šapoka too, is of opinion that the remains of Vytautas the Great must be looked for at Vilnius.

Reverting to the first stone buildings in Vilnius, it should be kept in mind that Lithuania was converted to Christianity at a time, when in Western Europe the Late Gothic style prevailed. Hence, the first stone churches at Vilnius were built in that style. The historians of art do not agree as to which church was to be considered the oldest, but, in any event, it can be said that the churches of the Franciscans, St. Nicholas' (see ill. 5—6), and St. John's (see ill. 26) are among the oldest monuments of Vilnius. The Bernardine Church of St. Francis (see ill. 7—11), erected 1491—1506 by order of Mikalojus Radvila, Count Palatine of

Vilnius, is likewise an old and venerable building; it was damaged by a Russian cannonade during the Lithuanian-Polish revolt led by Tadeusz Kosciuszko. (The Bernardine friars had come to Vilnius in 1469 and had built first a wooden church at the same place).

One of the finest Vilnius Gothic structures, the belltower of the Franciscan Church was demolished in 1862 during the Russian occupation.

But Vilnius, unlike the big cities of the west, was not thoroughly influenced by the Gothic style. The Gothic style in the West had already come to an end; on the other hand, in Lithuania bricks were still very expensive and skilled craftsmen were scarce. Therefore at Vilnius, the forms developed were not so monumental; their grandeur is expressed in the calm clearness of the ground-plan and in the harmony of the proportions. The relative simplicity of forms and the intended closeness of the interior roused in the believers in no minor degree concentration and pious devotion as did the masterpieces of the Gothic style at its height in Western Europe.

Until the late XVIth century, Gothic edifices were erected at Vilnius; the last flare-up of that style is St. Anne's (see ill. 12—14), built by an unknown master in the second half of the XVIth century. Though in construction it is no equal to the performances of the flamboyant Gothic style of Flanders, it will not fail to rouse the attention of the passer-by, owing to the loftiness of its conception. It is quite astonishing to what extent the vivacity of the phantastic design balances the weight of the material. Not in vain was it reported that Napoleon, impressed by the elegant lightness of its architecture, would have liked to carry it to Paris on the palm of his hand.

While the Gothic style still prevailed, the Renaissance — which during the XVIth century had already obtained a large popularity in the West — made its entry in Vilnius. It is true, the most outstanding Renaissance edifices of Vilnius have been mostly destroyed, but even the preserved and more modest works bear an eloquent testimony to the refined taste and exceptional sumptuousness that prevailed in XVIth century Vilnius. The Renaissance flourished especially under the reigns of King Zigmantas II "The Old" (1506—1544—1548) and his son



After old Engravings

King Zigmantas II "The Old" (1506—1548), and his Son Zigmantas Augustas (1544—1572, right)

Zigmantas Augustas (1544 resp. 1548—1572)⁹⁾: Particularly during the former's rule, the economic conditions of the country had risen very quickly. This Lithuanian Ruler (also King of Poland), had spent many years of his youth in Western Europe. There he had become acquainted with various economic reforms which he later successfully applied in his own country. The revenues of the State Treasury grew rapidly, and this economic prosperity went to the benefit chiefly of the capital city. Zigmantas II, under the influence of his consort, Princess Bona Sforza of Milan began rebuilding the Lower Castle in ostentatious Renaissance style.

We know that the Lower Castle comprised at that time a whole series of different buildings: the Cathedral, Tribunal, Prison, Arsenal, Grandducal Stud, and others. Standing now is only the Cathedral at the corner of the so-called Castle Park and an old tower, on which later the belltower was erected.

⁹⁾ From 1548 to 1572 also King of Poland.

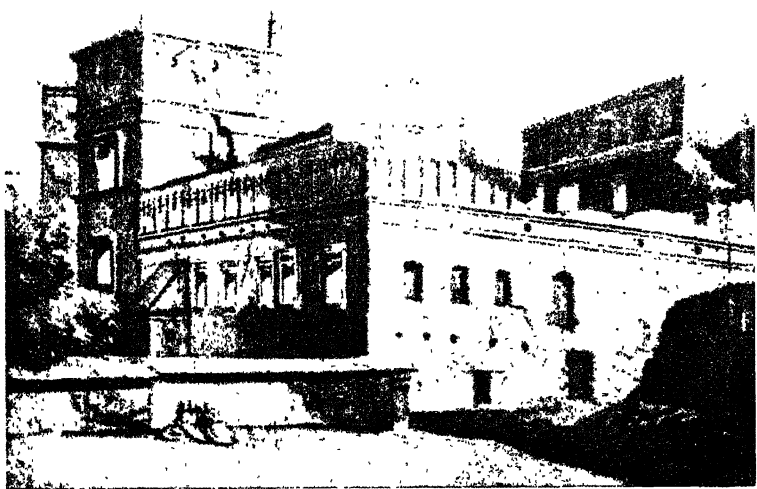


After old Engravings

*Two Portraits of Queen Barbora Radvilaitė (d. 1551), Consort
of Zigmantas Augusta*

Zigmantas „the Old“ was succeeded on the throne by his son Zigmantas Augustas who, though not being his father's peer as a ruler, was a great lover of arts and a noble-minded patron. He led a life of splendor and sumptuousness, finished the rebuilding of the Lower Castle initiated by his father, collected rich artistic treasures and founded a big and valuable library, which afterwards was ceded to the Vilnius Academy. Because of his kinship to the Western dynasties (his first and his third wives, Elizabeth and Catherine, were both Habsburg princesses, daughters of Emperor Ferdinand), he maintained close relations with the most renowned scholars and artists of his time, the more so as he spoke fluently all the important European languages.

Of the XVIth century only one gate in the city walls, the Aurora Gate (see ill. 18—19), has been preserved, which was begun in 1503 by Grand Duke Aleksandras (1492—1501—1506) and finished in 1522 by Zigmantas II. In it stands a wonderworking Renaissance image



Painted in about 1800 by J. Smuglevicius

The Ruins of the Lower Castle, demolished by the Fire of 1610 and the Russian Invasion in 1655. Completely dismantled in 1795—1805 during the Russian Occupation

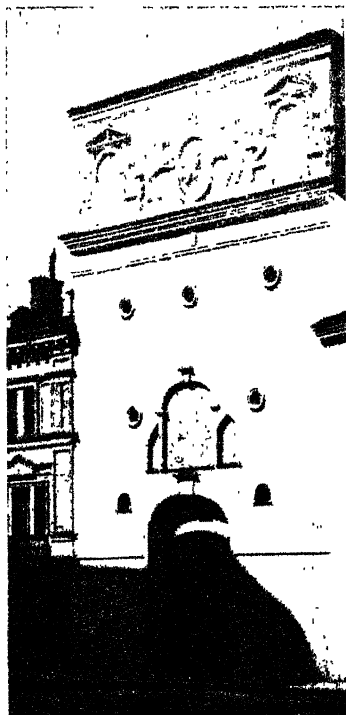
of the Holy Virgin (see ill. 20). Originally the town had five gates, but it can be seen from an engraving of 1648 that this number grew to ten. These city-walls, as well as the Lower Castle, were demolished in 1795—1805 by order of the Czar during the Russian occupation, for being “undesirable witnesses of the former might of the Lithuanian State”. Only the Aurora Gate was spared this fate, because the Czar was afraid of possible trouble rising among the population, who held the wonderworking image in high veneration. The painting of the image is the work of an unknown master and according to some connoisseurs, the features resemble Barbora Radvilaitė, second wife of Grand Duke Zigmantas Augustas. It can be supposed that the intrigues of the Court, endeavoring to thwart the secret love affair of the Grand Duke with the beautiful Barbora, occasioned the legend that the painting of the Holy Virgin was an image of the Barbora Radvil-

laité. It was only after his father's death that the Grand Duke could introduce his wife into the Royal Family. There are no exact dates as to the period in which the splendid picture was painted, but it is mentioned in the middle of the XVIth century as standing in Aurora Gate. On their arrival at Vilnius in the XVIIth century, the Carmelites noticed that the image was the object of general veneration on the part of the population. In 1671, a wooden chapel was built above the gate and with great solemnities the image was moved there. In 1729 the wooden structure was replaced by a chapel of stone, which was rebuilt in 1829 in Neoclassic style. The precious silver coat was made in the XVIIth century by local goldsmiths of Vilnius.

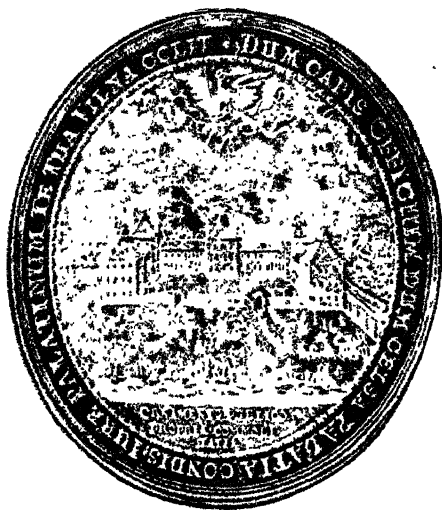
Traces of the Renaissance can be found also in St. Michael's (see ill. 21—22), but that fashionable church has had its original aspect much changed owing to various rebuildings. Its interior contains the tombs, executed in colored marble and in Baroque style, of Leonas Sapiega, Grand Chancellor and Headman of Lithuania, Count Palatine of Vilnius, and of his family. The high-altar, also in marble, is the work of an unknown Italian artist.

The palace of the princely family Radvila was renowned for its particular magnificence. That Renaissance edifice has also unfortunately been destroyed.

The blossoming of architecture at Vilnius came to a standstill due to the inroads of the Reformation. According to the then popular fashion,



South View of Aurora Gate



Medal (16th Century) showing the Radvula Pala

the courtiers abjured their Catholic creed and embraced Protestantism, and the troubles arising therefrom, as well as the dissensions between the two confessions, disturbed essentially the entire public life. The ecclesiastical and the worldly dignitaries, who formerly used to construct large palaces, turned now all their energies and efforts to spiritual issues. The building of monumental edifices in Lithuania and particularly in her capital, the splendid center of the country, met with an almost complete block. This state of affairs was changed only when Bishop Valerijonas Protasevicius¹⁰⁾ in 1569 called the Jesuits to Lithuania in order to resume more vigorously the fight against rapidly spreading Protestantism. When these learned and art-loving men arrived at Vilnius, the greater part of the leading circles were already lost to Catholicism. Their first blow against the new confession in Lithuania was the foundation

¹⁰⁾ 1554—1556, Bishop of Luck, and 1556—1580 Bishop of Vilnius.

of the Academy at Vilnius, in 1579¹¹⁾, which shortly afterwards was confirmed by Pope Gregory XIII. Thanks to the energy and the ability of the Jesuits, Catholicism reconquered subsequently its previously abandoned positions. The construction of the Academy (see ill. 25) and of the Papal Seminary (see ill. 31) inaugurated at Vilnius a new architectural epoch, that of the Baroque, which was to last for two centuries.

The activity of the Jesuits was supported to a high measure by the Lithuanian-Polish ruler Steponas Batoras, who intended to erect therewith a defensive wall against the Slavonic menace and the advance of Byzantine cultural influences. How close the relationship of Vilnius with Western civilization was is proved in subsequent times by the structures of Orthodox churches and synagogues, which in sharp contrast to tradition were built in the Baroque style.

Besides the Academy, the Jesuits founded also colleges and institutes.

At the grandducal court the mighty and influential Sapiega family obtained high positions, also the Radvilas, the Pacas, and the Katkevičiai contributed in imparting new impulses to the cultural life in Vilnius.

Another principal Baroque monument at Vilnius is the imposing church of St. Casimir (see ill. 27—28), built twenty years later than "Il Gesu" of Rome, and after the pattern of that famous church. This splendid monument of the Early Baroque period exercised a profound influence on the development of that style at Vilnius, and the masterly solution of the



*The Image of the Wonderworking
Holy Virgin of Vilnius and Lithuania
(see ill. 20 without Regal Coat)*

¹¹⁾ At that time 600 students were enrolled.



After old Engravings

*Dignitaries of Vilnius: Leonas Sapiega (1585—1633), and Kristupas Pacas
(1656—1684, right)*

problems of space, the distribution of light and of construction have become examples for the designs of subsequent churches. This church was damaged by the fires of 1655, 1706, 1737, and 1749. In 1812, it was used as a depot for Napoleon's Great Army.

St. Theresa's, formerly the Barefooted Carmelites' Church (see ill. 43—44)¹²⁾ is considered one of the most elaborate Baroque works of Vilnius; fine colored marble and Swedish granites are used for the adornment of the front and of the interior. The art-loving patron Steponas Pacas, Vice-Chancellor of Lithuania, erected it in 1625—1650, after a design of the Italian master Constantino Tencalli. This statesman had been a frequent guest in the workshop of Peter Paul Rubens and had also traveled widely in Italy and Western Europe.

The Baroque art at Vilnius met with various difficulties, such as the Russian invasion of 1655, which came to an end when M y k o l a s

¹²⁾ Please correct accordingly the title of ill. 43.

Pacas, Headman of Lithuania and Count Palatine of Vilnius, succeeded in ousting the Russians again in 1661. Pacas was not only a devout and convinced Catholic and an exemplary commander, but also a great humanist and a lover of the arts. His family derived from the Florentine patricians of Pazzi. In compliance with a vow for the salvation of his life, Pacas invited renowned Italian builders and architects to Vilnius. He caused them to erect, on behalf of the Lateran Chapter, at the place where stood a wooden church (which had been burnt down several times), St. Peter and Paul's (see ill. 33—42), one of the most beautiful churches of the town and of all Eastern Europe. Though the exterior of the church shows some shortcomings owing to its burdensome and very wide-drawn front and its weighty dome, its interior makes up for this by extraordinary beauty and sumptuousness, and by the abundant, but tastefully distributed sculptures.

The work was directed by the Italians Frigidiani of Lucca and Giovanni Zaor, architect of the Royal Court at Cracow. The adornment of the rich interior kept 200 stucco workers busy for eight years under the supervision of Pietro Peretti, Giovanni Maria Galli of Milan, and the German Schreiter. After the premature death of the founder, the high-altar and the pulpit remained unfinished and the latter with two side-altars was terminated only in 1803 by Giovanni Beretti and Michele Piano of Milan. The frescoes in the chief nave were painted by Martino de Altamonte of Rome, in the XVIIth century.

Also a stupendous jewel of Baroque art is St. Casimir Chapel (see ill. 30) in the Cathedral, which was built in 1620—1630¹³⁾ by Zigmantas III and Vladislovas IV. The design was made by the Flemish master Pieter Dankers de Rij, the frescoes were painted by the Italian artists Del Bene and Giacinto Campani. The gilded pulpit, carved in a most remarkable manner by the hands of local craftsmen, was added in the middle of the XVIIth century.

In spite of the calamities Vilnius had to suffer within a short space of time — fires, plagues, and invasions of Russians and Swedes — the town always recovered rapidly and adorned itself anew with churches

¹³⁾ According to Polish sources, in 1624—1636.

and palaces. The destroyed and burnt-down edifices were rebuilt or reconditioned. This is the reason why one must not be surprised that nearly all the buildings of Vilnius show a composition of different styles, and of various epochs. These compositions were however performed in such skilful and masterly a manner that, though the diversity of the styles can be noticed, one remains astonished at the wonderful harmony of these so manifold elements, the more so when one realizes that such a task presents the most difficult problems, even to the best of architects.

The XVIIIth century was especially rich in renovations and rebuilding; the damaged edifices were cloaked in new dresses, — in affected Late Baroque style (see front of St. John's, ill. 46 and p. 49).

Among the most famous works of Late Baroque, the fifteen altars of the Dominican Church and the ten of St. John's (see ill. 47) deserve special mention. In them, the composition reaches its peak and they can be put in a line with the best works of this kind in Western Europe. The solution of the problems of profundity and of illumination appears clear and convincing, and the distribution of sculptures brings about an effect of unusual harmony.

The giant organ was transferred to St. John's from the Jesuits' Church at Polock.

After the Italian custom, the bell-tower of St. John's is a separate campanile, 165 ft. high, built by the Jesuits in the XVIIth century.

Besides Late Baroque, the native artists of Vilnius developed a special Lithuanian variety of architecture (see ill. 52). Its chief characteristics consists of two slender towers with powerful but loosened construction, which direct the view of the devout upwards to Heaven. The arrangement of the masses, proportioned by cornices, testifies to the noble taste and the refined constructive sense of the native architects.

Among the splendid edifices built in Late Baroque style, the following are especially worthy of mention: Sacred Heart Church (see ill. 45), Lord Jesus Church, St. Trinity's or Basilians' Church (see ill. 50), St. Catherine or Benedictine Church (see ill. 51), Ascension or Missionary Church (see ill. 52), St. James and Philip's, and others. The renovation and building of churches and palaces went on until Neoclassicism had a firm footing.



Evangelist St. John in St. Peter and Paul's Church



*St. John's Church and Academy Square, after an Engraving of the 18th Century
To the right Bell-tower of St. John's Church*

Parallel with the rebirth of Classicism in Western Europe, that style, too, is largely found in the architecture of Vilnius. The first creator of Neoclassic buildings at Vilnius was the architect Knackfusas (*Knackjuss*), a professor of the local Academy. Although being of German descent, this outstanding pedagogue was perfectly imbued with the local tradition of architecture. Among his works are specially worth of mention the renovations of the White Room and the Observatory of the University, in 1782—1788 (see ill. 59). One of the most outspoken representatives of European Classicism was

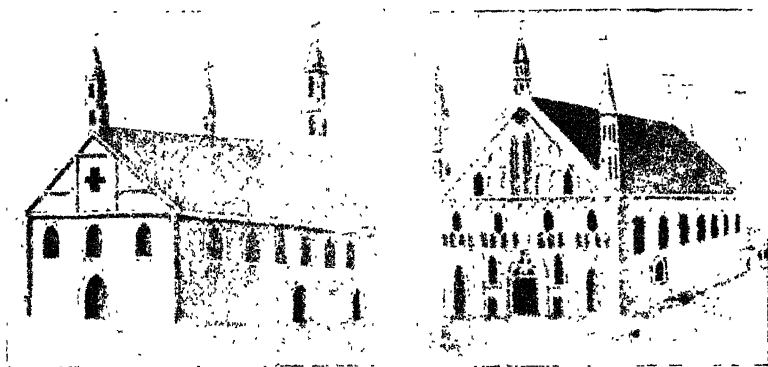


Laurynas Stuoka-Gucevičius (1753—1798)
Architect

the architect Laurynas Stuoka Gucevičius (1753—1798) of Vilnius. Born as the son of a poor Lithuanian serf in the district of Rokiskis, he overcame, thanks to his extraordinary gifts, all social prejudices prevailing in the aristocracy and in the middle-classes of that time, and owing to his genius, he became within a short time, one of the most important and famous architects of his epoch. Among his most celebrated works are the renovation of the St. Stanislas Cathedral (see ill. 56—57) and of the Episcopal Palace (destroyed), as well as the construction of the Town-hall of Vilnius (see ill. 58, which in 1845 was converted into the State Theater) and of the Verkiai Palace. A particularly great genius for adaptation was required for the building of the Gothic Cathedral into severe Classicistic forms.

The frontal sculptures were executed by the Italian Righi and the Academy-professor Šulcas of Vilnius; the paintings of the interior are the work of the Italian Villani and Smuglevičius of Vilnius.

About the only building worthy of mention which was erected in Empire style at Vilnius by the Russians during their long occupation, is the



After old Paintings

Second original Structure of the Cathedral of Vilnius, burnt in 1419, and third Structure (right), burnt in 1530

Governor's Palace (see ill. 60—61), designed by the architect Stasov of St. Petersburg (*Leningrad*) and by command of Czar Alexander I. The building itself and the supervision of it, lay in the hands of the renowned Polish architect Karol Podczasinski (1790—1860), who also renovated the Pillar Room of the University in 1817, and constructed the Reformers' Church (see ill. 62).

The frequent fires of Vilnius must be mentioned as being one of the most distressing facts of its history. Most outstanding artistic works of the town were the victims of fires, wars, and foreign occupation. It is only in the course of centuries that Vilnius was transformed from a wooden town into a stone city. As long as wooden houses were still interspersed with stone buildings, the fires had a good chance of spreading. In order to demonstrate the pernicious effect of big fires, it may be of interest to mention the following historically documented descriptions of but some of them.

The first great fire we know of, occurred in 1419, destroying the Lower Castle and the Cathedral (the second structure), together with a large part of the town. The chronicles mention further a dangerous fire in 1530, to which fell victims the Castle built by Grand Duke Aleksandras, and the



After old Paintings

Fourth Cathedral of Vilnius, rebuilt 1538—1544, and Fifth Structure of 1632 (right)

Cathedral, the third one, rebuilt in 1544. In 1557, the whole quarter between the Castle, Main Street and Vilnelė river burnt down, beginning with the present St. Michael Church, which at that time did not yet exist, and Literates' Lane, up to Latakas, everything became a prey of the flames (see p. 61).

Another great fire afflicted Vilnius in 1610. At that time the fire broke out on July 1st, near the Franciscan Church of St. Mary, in Trakai Street, destroyed the church and the monastery of the Dominicans, St. Trinity Church, the Jesuit's Novitiate; further damaged the roof of S. John's and the present University, but the interior of St. John's could fortunately be saved. The fire then spread towards the Castle, destroying part of that palace and the Cathedral, and only the chapel of St. Casimir (though not the present one) was spared. The fire spread easily, because on that very day most inhabitants of the town were attending a religious procession in the neighborhood. The flames seized both sides of Main Street, rushing towards Town-hall Square, but before reaching St. Casimir Church, they were stopped by sudden and violent rain.

The best chronicled destruction of the town occurred in 1655. The Muscovite troops on entering the town turned it to ashes. Nobody was allowed to fight the gigantic fire that thus ravaged undisturbed for 17 days. When the Czar arrived later he could not take up his quarters at Vilnius, because of the prevailing burned smell and the destruction of the town. The Russians moreover had plundered houses and churches, forced open and violated the most precious sarcophaguses, mischievously destroyed the most noble and inestimably valued works of art. A big part of the robbed treasures were hauled by the Muscovites to Russia, to wit not only precious paintings, engravings, furniture, gold and silver in ingots and in works of art, but even artistic stoves, marblesills, mantelpieces, and inlaid floors (the latter from Radvila Palace in Foundry Street). One may suppose that still nowadays there are in the Kremlin many of the works of art carried-off at that time from Vilnius. For six long years the Russians ravaged in the most atrocious manner, before they could again be expelled by the Lithuanian army (in 1661). This was the most extensive destruction in the whole history of Vilnius.

The town had not yet recovered when new misadventures fell. It is known that in 1706 another fire broke out at Vilnius, devastating the quarter of the Town-hall together with Main Street.

The fire was followed by a terrible plague and famine, which depopulated not only the town itself, but also the entire country. The plague ravaged from 1708 to 1711, leaving alive only one third of the former population, and the chronicles report that one individual monk of the St. Rochus hermites directed the burial of 22 862 (?)¹⁴⁾ persons between the July of 1708 and Easter of 1709. People died in hundreds and in thousands, and the corpses were piled in the streets one above the other, where they were left lying for days. After the plague, and the famine associated with it were over, the town presented a dead, ghastly view.

On June 2nd, 1737, the town again fell victim to a devastating fire.

Two more fires are worthy of mention: those of 1748 and 1749, the former of which was particularly dreadful, inflicting atrocious wounds to the town. The first fire originated on the 11th of June, in a Jew's home in the Užupis suburb, devastated the palace of the Metropolitan and two Orthodox churches together with the adjacent buildings. It finally spread

¹⁴⁾ According to the Author, this number is exaggerated.

in two different directions: one branch extending to the upper town through Latakas, the other one towards the Subačiaus Gate, without however reaching it. The fire advanced through Main Street up to the Castle where it demolished the gate and the Tribunal. Besides Castle Street and Main Street, also the following streets were burnt: St. Michael (*Šv. Mykolo*), Glazier (*Stikliu*), Jews (*Žydu*), Dominicans (*Dominikonu*), *Traku*, Foundry (*Liejyklos*), and Bonifratres (*Bonifratru*) Streets. From Tatar (*Totoriu*) St., the fire turned to St. Ignatius Church and jumped from the premises of the cloister over to St. Magdalen's. In the course of this fire, the following churches were reduced to ashes or damaged: St. John's, the Franciscans' and the Dominicans' churches, St. Rochus, the Charites', the Bonifratres', and the Piers' churches, St. Trinity's, St. Ignatius' and St. Magdalen's, and also two Calvinistic churches, one Protestant, two Orthodox churches, and one synagogue -- 469 big buildings and several hundreds of smaller houses had become a prey of the flames, and 29 persons had lost their lives.

The subsequent fire, of 1749, started on the 8th of June in Subačiaus Street, whence it leapt over to the Holy Spirit Cloister and spread out towards the Town-hall. St. Casimir's was damaged, as well as the Town-hall, the whole of *Arkliu*, *Karmelitu*, *Imbaru*, *Stikliu*, *Žydu* and *Mikalojus* Streets with St. Nicholas', *Žemaičiu* Street; 292 houses, among which also the well-known "Imbarai"¹⁵⁾ shops had fallen a victim to the flames.

For a long time, Vilnius was not able to recover from these two big fires, and in 1765, the Municipality complained to the Parliament that several streets had not yet been cleaned of the rubble.

Exceptionally valuable material concerning the history of Vilnius is buried in the State Archives (*Lietuvos Metrika*), which had been promoted in the XVth century and were in existence up to the partition of the Lithuano-Polish State. In the meantime, part of the files -- various car-loads -- had been removed to Warsaw, because King Stanislovas Poniatovskis ordered copies to be made of the important documents. In the course of time and by frequent use they became worn out. When Russia occupied the two countries, the State Archives both at Vilnius and at Warsaw, were carried to the Kremlin. After World War I,

¹⁵⁾ The „Imbarai“ shops handled a great variety of spices imported from far-off countries.

as a result of which the two States having reattained their independence, part of the archives were returned to Warsaw. But the negotiations between Lithuania and Russia and also between Poland concerning the restitution of the Lithuanian State Archives remained without result, as the Russians claimed a large part of the records referred to vast Russian territories, which in former times had been under Lithuanian suzerainty. Nothing is known of the fate of the archives kept at Warsaw, but it may be supposed that they were destroyed by the bombardment of that city in World War II.

During the XIXth century Vilnius developed more in extension, and this tendency continued up to the most recent times; buildings of that period, however, have no great artistic value.

In 1939, when Vilnius was again united with Lithuania, an extensive reconstruction of the town was projected. Under the direction of Prof. Vytautas Žemkalnis, an urbanistic reconstruction plan was drawn up, according to the most modern experiences. Besides the restoration of old architectural monuments, the construction of a new Opera House, an Academy of Fine Arts, and a Technical Academy were planned. But the events of World War II did not permit the thorough execution of the scheduled and started projects.

Among the restorations performed may be here mentioned as remarkable, the crown on the dome of St. Casimir's (see ill. 29). The old grandducal crown of Lithuania, according to which the crown of the dome was shaped, had been kept at the State's Treasury at Vilnius, but was brought to Warsaw prior to the partition of the Lithuano-Polish State, and then disappeared. In 1840, St. Casimir's had become the church of the Russian Military Post, and the Russian architect Tchagin replaced the crown by a Byzantine bulb, using the old material. In 1941—1943, the bulb was reconverted into the crown, by architect Jonas Mulokas, in accordance with old descriptions and engravings. The layer of gold, which originated from the gilding of the first crown, was still so thick that it proved sufficient for covering the new crown. The most reliable description of the old grandducal crown is considered that of St. Casimir's crown, which had been found in 1830, when the coffin of St. Casimir was opened. Though St. Casimir (1458—1484)¹⁰), the Patron of Lithuania, is not men-

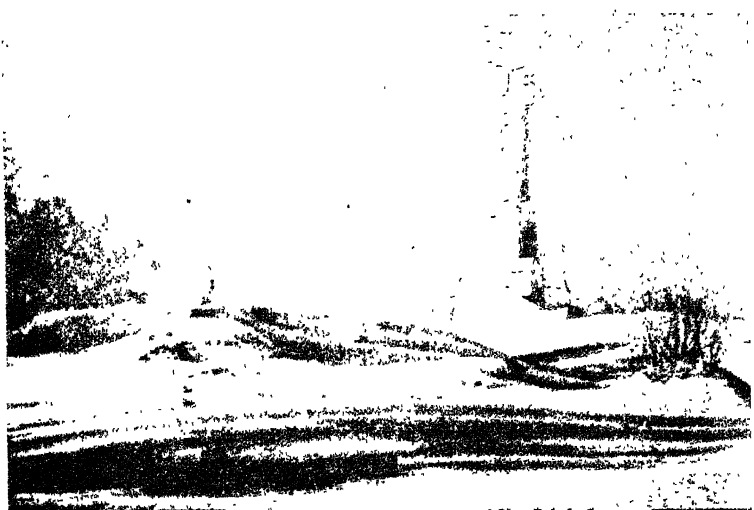
¹⁰ He was beatified in 1521. and canonized in 1602.



Prince St. Casimir (1458—1484), Patron of Lithuania, praying a whole Night at the Cathedral, where his Attendants find him in the Morning

tioned by history as a reigning monarch, he was crowned, according to the opinion of some historians, Grand Duke seven days prior to his death.

The Cathedral Square was also thoroughly replanned and rebuilt. A whole series of commemorative tablets were erected, recording the most important historic events and personalities of Vilnius. Also the old Ber-



Built 1915 after Design by A. Witwulski, Architect

Three Crosses Hill at Vilnius. According to the Legend (?) seven Franciscan Monks are said to have been martyred at this Spot during the Reign of Grand Duke Algirdas (1345—1377)

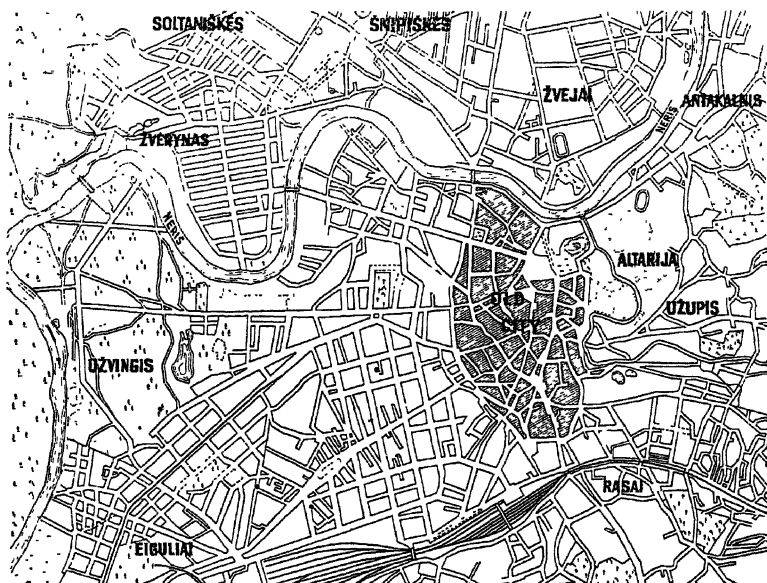
nardine Cloister was reconditioned. It was designated as preliminary seat to the Academy of Fine Arts.

Many new buildings were erected for economic purposes (an electro-technical manufacture, a radio-factory, a factory for agricultural machines, etc.).

In spite of the many serious calamities which befell Vilnius, it is easy to see what its destiny could have been. It is still today one of the most beautiful and monumental cities of Eastern Europe.

It is not possible to mention in such short description the entire multitude of artistic treasures in which Vilnius abounds, such as many precious chapels, sarcophaguses, church treasures, palaces, and private collections. The renowned artistic churches alone of Vilnius number about thirty.

The chief charm of Vilnius lies not only in its single buildings and architectonic groups, but even more so in the joint effect of its general view, its squares and streets with their ever-different aspects. The romantic mood of the narrow and tortuous lanes, the effect of many towers and edifices fixed in their wonderful natural frame; these are the characteristics that distinguish Vilnius from other ordinary towns.



Present Plan of Vilnius. The Area of the Town itself measures 12 356 Acres. If the Suburbs are included, it covers 25 700 Acres with a Population of 208 000 in 1938, compared to 56 135 in 1836, 82 668 in 1875, 154 532 in 1897 and 182 795 in 1909

VILNIUS AND LITHUANIA

Up to the present day, the real importance of Vilnius for Lithuania, has, unfortunately, remained hidden to the world. It is true, Vilnius, and its art-treasures are known but to a narrow circle, because the town itself and its development were for a very long time and still are covered by the veil of oblivion.

Since times immemorial, Vilnius has been growing and expanding as the cradle and as the stimulating power of Lithuanian culture and national life with a tradition to which it may point with justified pride.

Already in the XVth century Vilnius had been known throughout Europe as an important center of the press and cultural activities. Within its confines the first printing house put into operation in Eastern Europe was set up in 1524—25. In the middle of the same century, two more large printing enterprises installed facilities. Here, Lithuanian laws, works of scientific, religious and historical interest were printed. Members of the Reformed Church established printing works of their own publishing, in 1600, the renowned "Postilla Lietuwischka".

Keeping step with the rapid progress made by the printers, the arts and sciences also flourished at Vilnius attaining a high standard that favorably compares with that of the Western European countries. Few cities offered more remarkable educational opportunities than Vilnius.



The Ruins of the Upper Castle, after a Drawing of the 19th Century. The Castle was destroyed when in 1661 Mykolas Pacas, Headman of Lithuania and Palatine of Vilnius, laid siege to it expelling the defending Russians from it. To-day only one Tower is left standing

The Academy of Vilnius with its many renowned scientists, historians, writers, etc. must be cited as the foremost institution. Here, Konstantinas Širvydas, author of the Lithuanian Dictionary, compiled his celebrated work, and in 1650, here, too, was published the second "History of Lithuania"¹⁷ by Albertas Vijukas Kojalavičius, followed by many other works of great import. .

In 1773, the first Ministry of Education (Tautinės Edukacijos Komisija) was set up at Vilnius. Soon after the reformation of the Academy, the University brought forth again a large number of prominent Lithuanian names.

The town's monument of art and architecture are unequaled in all Eastern Europe giving best proof of its so highly developed cultural life.

As a center of religious activities, Vilnius held also a strong and important position, its influence being felt in large sections of the country.

¹⁷ The first History of Lithuania was printed in 1582 by Motiejus Strikauskis. The first Lithuanian book was printed in 1547 by Martynas Mažvydas at Karaliaučius, Prussian Lithuania.



The Tower of the Upper Castle, as it appears today

The remains of St. Casimir, the Patron Saint of Lithuania, found here its last resting place, and the image of the Wonderworking Holy Virgin of the Aurora Gate is deeply revered by the population of that nation.

As for the political aspirations, Vilnius was the very place where the country was given back its national independence. Thus, Vilnius has always been imbued with an invisible power and spiritual strength that ever again has been inspiring and sending out the call for the resurrection of Lithuania.

When in 1939, the town was handed back to Lithuania, the University, the Academy of Sciences (which, in 1949, commemorates the 370th anniversary of its foundation), the Institute of Lithuanian Philology, the Academy of Fine Arts, the Pedagogic Institute, the Technical High School, the Opera, the State Theatre and many other important institutions were reopened.

There is no field of activity in the cultural, social, economic and political life of Lithuania that has not been greatly influenced by Vilnius.

The living Vilnius is the best and most distinct witness of the vicissitudes of Lithuania. Better than voluminous chronicles, its old town-walls will bear a clear testimony to the past of the town: and each corner of Vilnius contains a piece of unwritten Lithuanian history. This history cannot be changed, it can only be falsified.

It would be a mistake, however, to assert that Vilnius belonged exclusively to Lithuania, for though it constitutes an organic unit together with the mother-country to be sure, it forms on the other hand as well an integrant part of Western European culture, of which it is still one of the most beautiful and choice flowers.

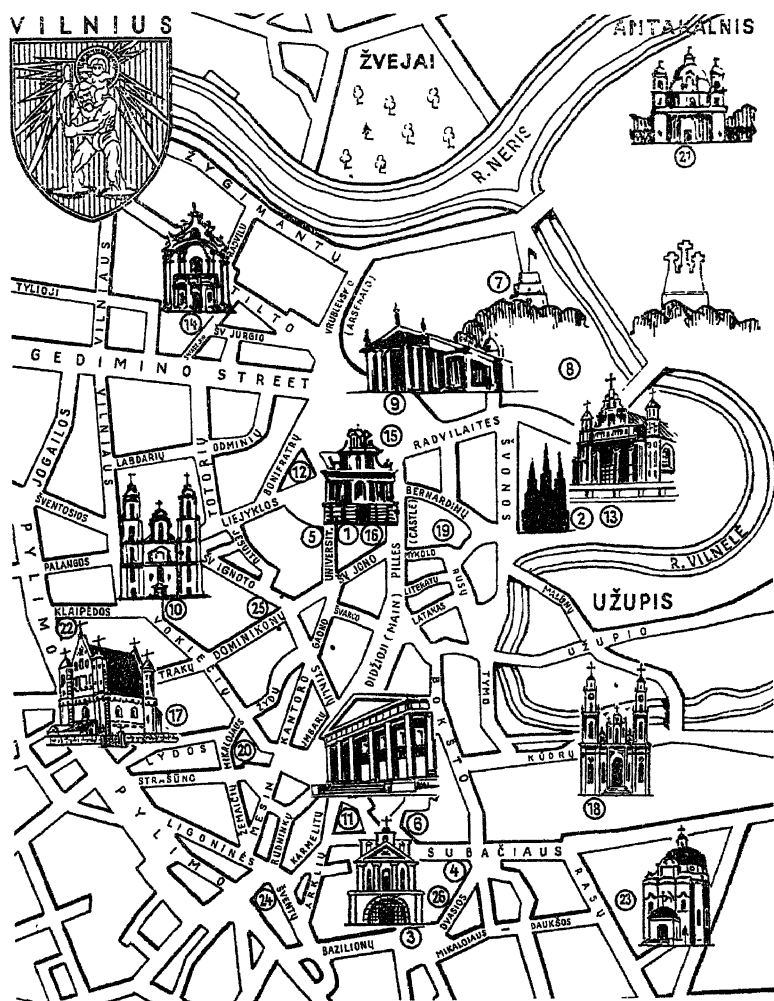
Jadov J. Vriemdy

LIST OF THE MOST REMARKABLE EDIFICES IN THE OLD CITY

No. on the Plan (Opposite)	Number of Illustration
1. <i>Academy and University of Vilnius at University Street</i>	25, 59
2. <i>St. Anne's Church at St. Anne's Street</i>	12 - 14
3. <i>Aurora Gate and Chapel at Aurora Gate Street</i>	18 - 20
4. <i>Basilian Church and Cloister at Aurora Gate Street</i>	50
5. <i>Bishop Seminary at University Street</i>	31
6. <i>St. Casimir (Jesuit) Church and Cloister at Main (Didzioji) St.</i>	27 - 29
7. <i>Castle-Tower (formerly High-Castle) on the Gediminas Hill</i>	
8. <i>Castle-Park, formerly Lower Castle and the Park of Grand Duke¹⁸</i>	
9. <i>Cathedral of St. Stanislaus at Cathedral Square</i>	17, 32, 56, 57
10. <i>St. Catherine (Benedictine) Church and Cloister at Vilnius St</i>	51
11. <i>City-Hall at Main (Didzioji) Street</i>	58
12. <i>St. Cross (Bonifratres) Church at Bonifratres Street</i>	
13. <i>St. Francis and St. Bernard (Bernardine) Church and Cloister at St. Anne's Street</i>	7 - 11, 14
14. <i>St. George Church at Ožėskienės Street</i>	
15. <i>Form Governors Palace at Napoleon Square</i>	60 61
16. <i>St. John's Church (Jesuit) at St. John's Street</i>	26, 46, 47
17. <i>St. Mary's Immaculate Conception (Franciscan) Church and Cloister at Franciscan Street</i>	
18. <i>St. Mary's Ascension (Missionary) Church and Cloister at Subačiaus Street</i>	52
19. <i>St. Michel's (Franciscan of St. Claire of Assisi) Church and Cloister at A. Volano Street</i>	21, 22
20. <i>St. Nicolaus (form. Franciscan) Church at St. Nicolaus Street</i>	5, 6
21. <i>St. Peter and St. Paul Church and Cloister of Chapter of Lateran in Antakalnis Suburb</i>	33 - 42
22. <i>Reformer's Church at Wall (Pylimo) Street</i>	62
23. <i>Sacred Heart Jesu (Visitors) Church and Cloister at Rasu St.</i>	45
24. <i>All Saints' (Conventual Carmelites) Church at All Saints' St</i>	
25. <i>St. Spirit's (Dominican) Church and Cloister at Dominican St.</i>	48, 49
26. <i>St. Theresia's (Barefooted Carmelites) Church and Cloister at Aurora Gate Street</i>	43, 44

¹⁸, Before flowing into the Neris river, the Vilnelė river at that time branched of another arm south of the Cathedral, this arm taking its way along the present Barbora Radvilaitė, St. Mary-Magdalene and Arsenal Streets (see p. 61) thus drawing an natural ring of rivers around the Castle portion of the town. Nowadays this river arm is led through an underground channel, which has been laid under the Cathedral Square.

PLAN SHOWING LOCATION OF THE MOST REMARKABLE
EDIFICES IN THE OLD CITY



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VILNIUS TO DAY . ILLUSTRATIONS

Photographs by V. Augustinas, J. Bulhak, B. Lukšaitiė, J. Mulokas, A. Naruševičius, E. Zdanaukas and others

1. General View



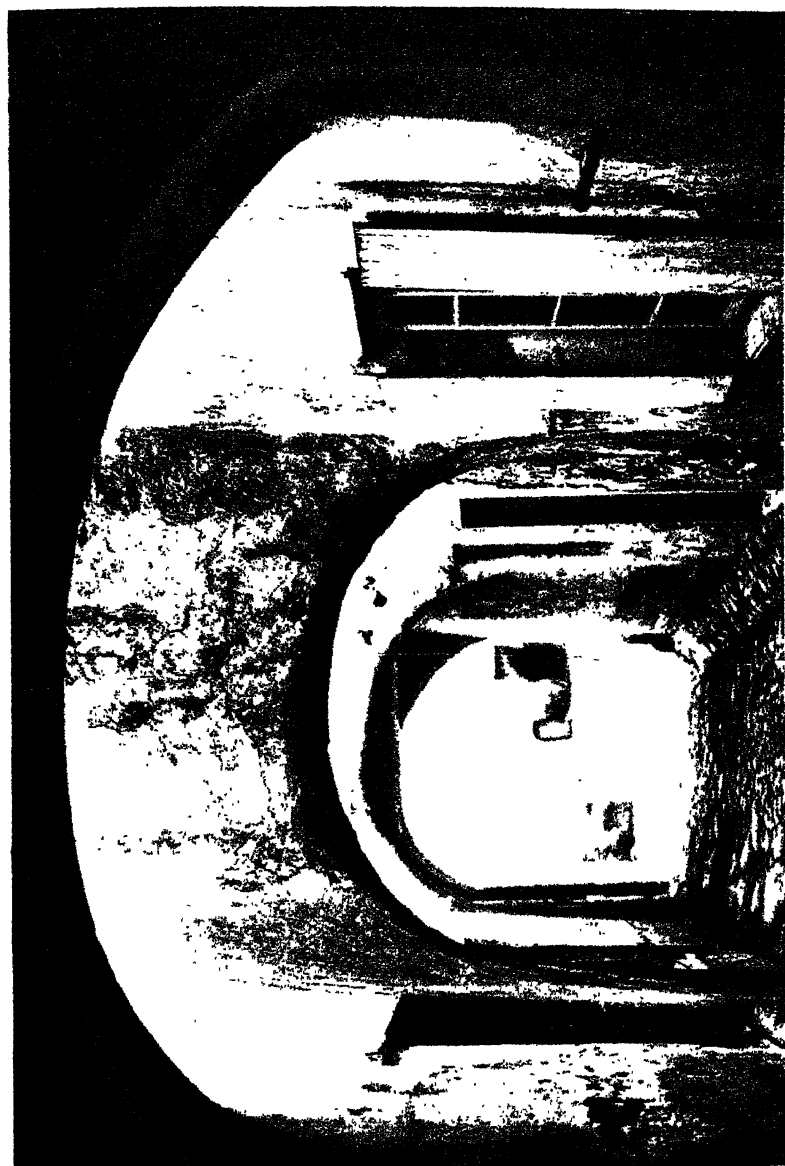
2. The Steeples of the City



3. *View of an old Street*



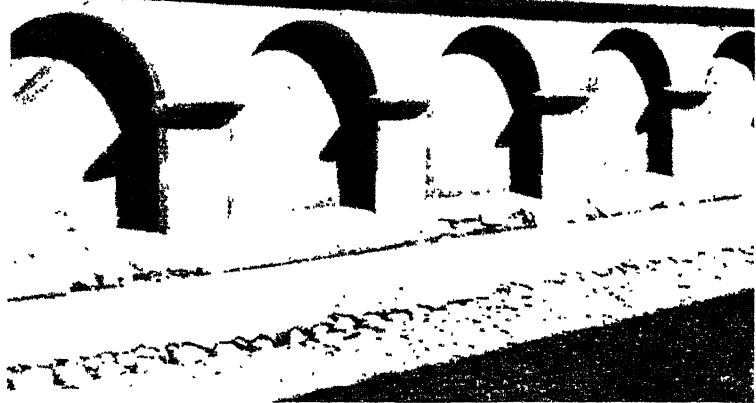
4. In the Ghetto
15th century



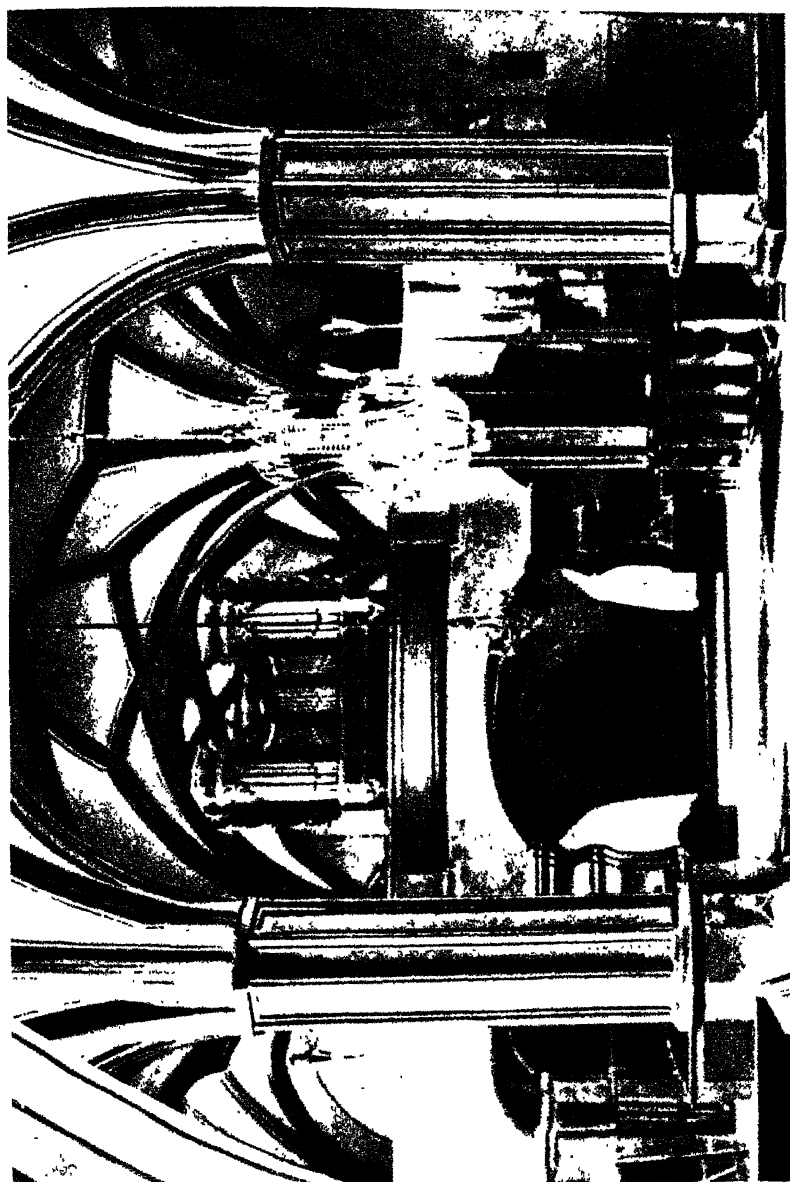
5. St. Nicolaus Church

The oldest Gothic in Vilnius

First wooden St. Nicolaus Church mentioned 1387 (1323?) by Grand Duke Jogaila. After fire rebuilt 1416 by Vytautas the Great, later restored 16th century

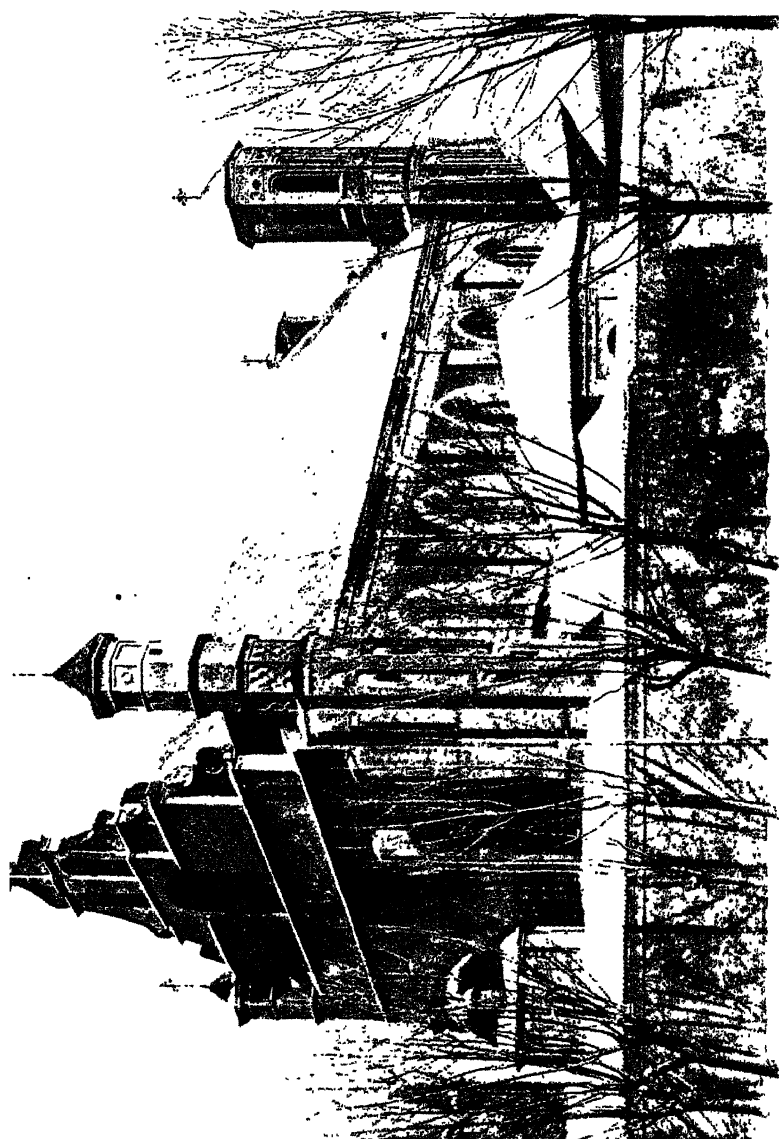


6. Interior of St. Nicolaus Church



7. Bernardinen Church

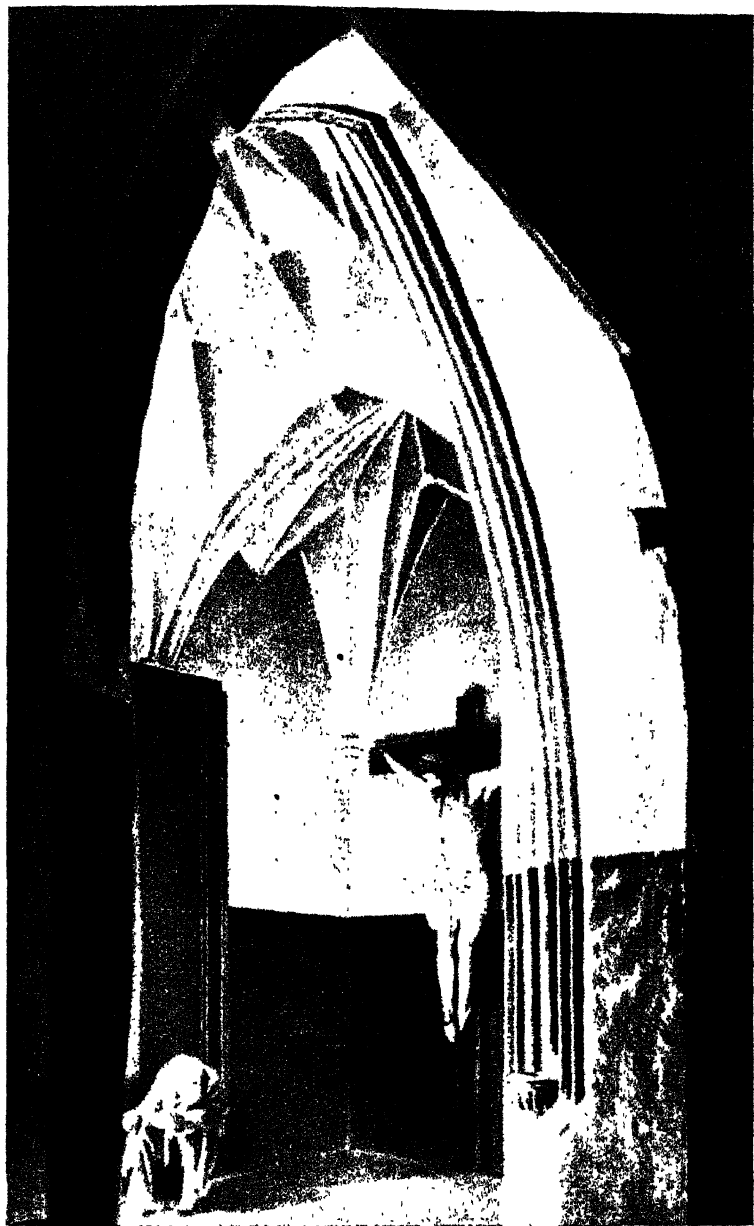
A wooden church stood here in the year 1469. A new church was built between 1491—1506 by Mikalojus Radvila, Palatine of Vilnius. Plundered 1655—1661 during the first invasion by Russians, later restored by Mykolas Pacas, Headman of Lithuania and Palatine of Vilnius



8. Interior of Bernardinen Church



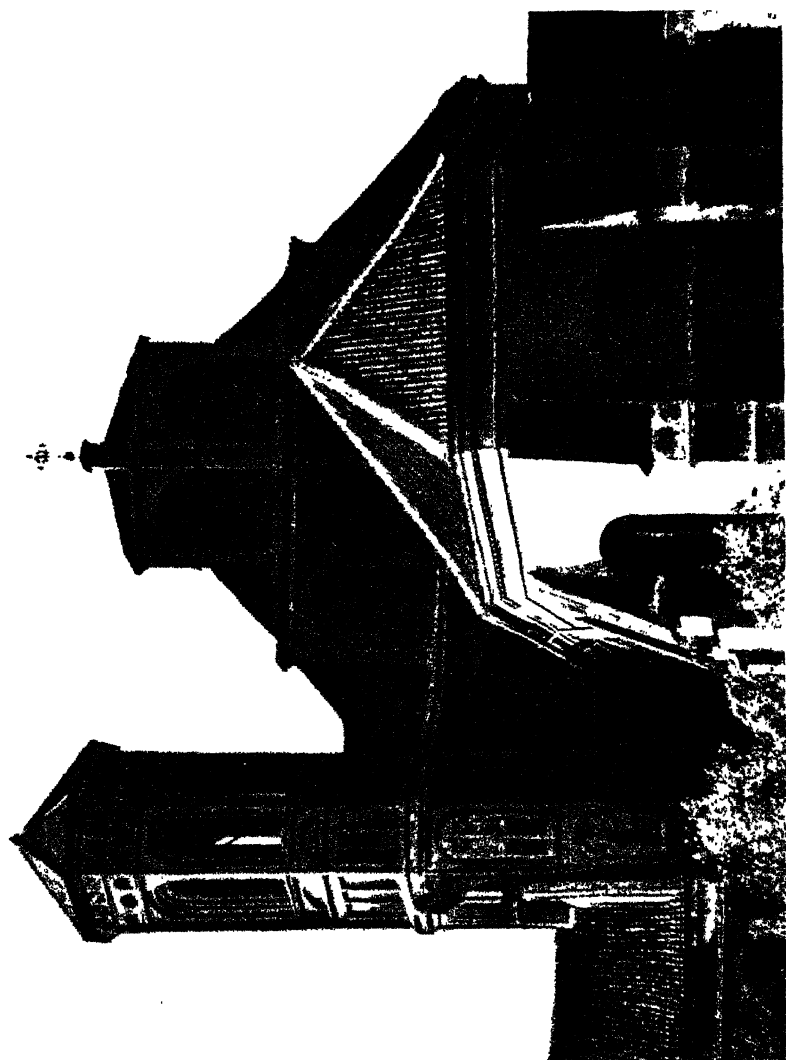
9. Arch in Bernardinen Church



10. Bell-Tower of Bernardinen Church

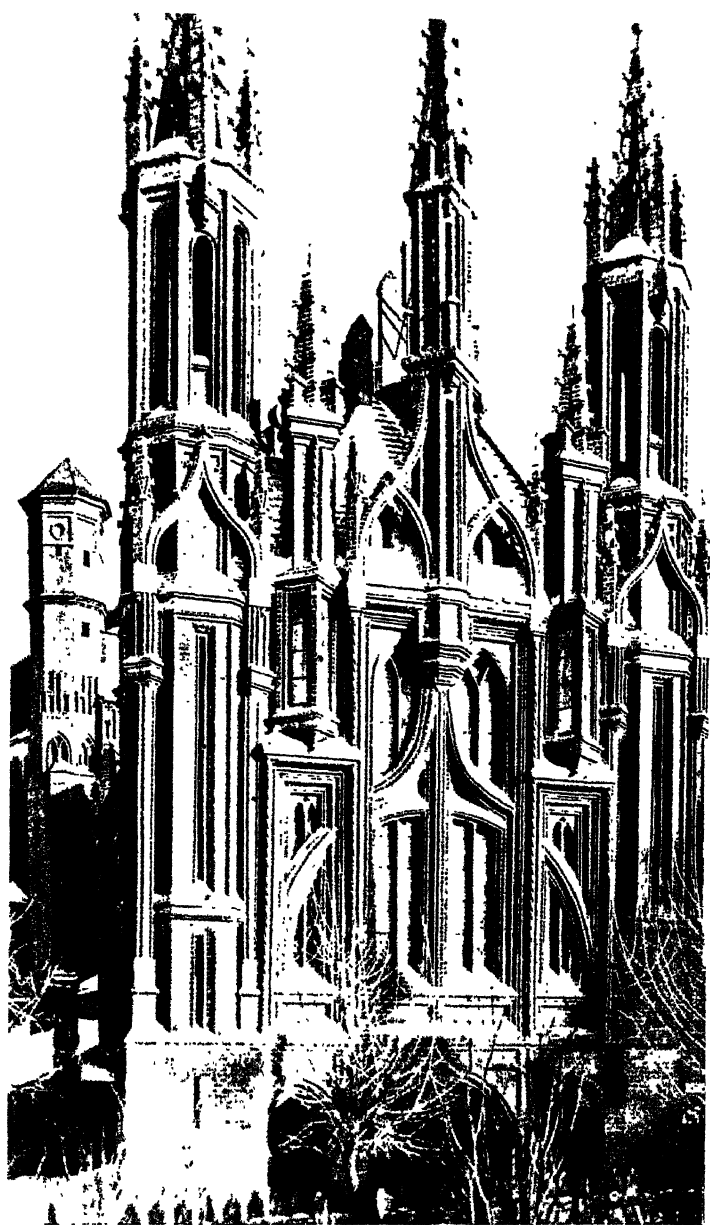


11. Choir and Eastside of Bernardinen Church

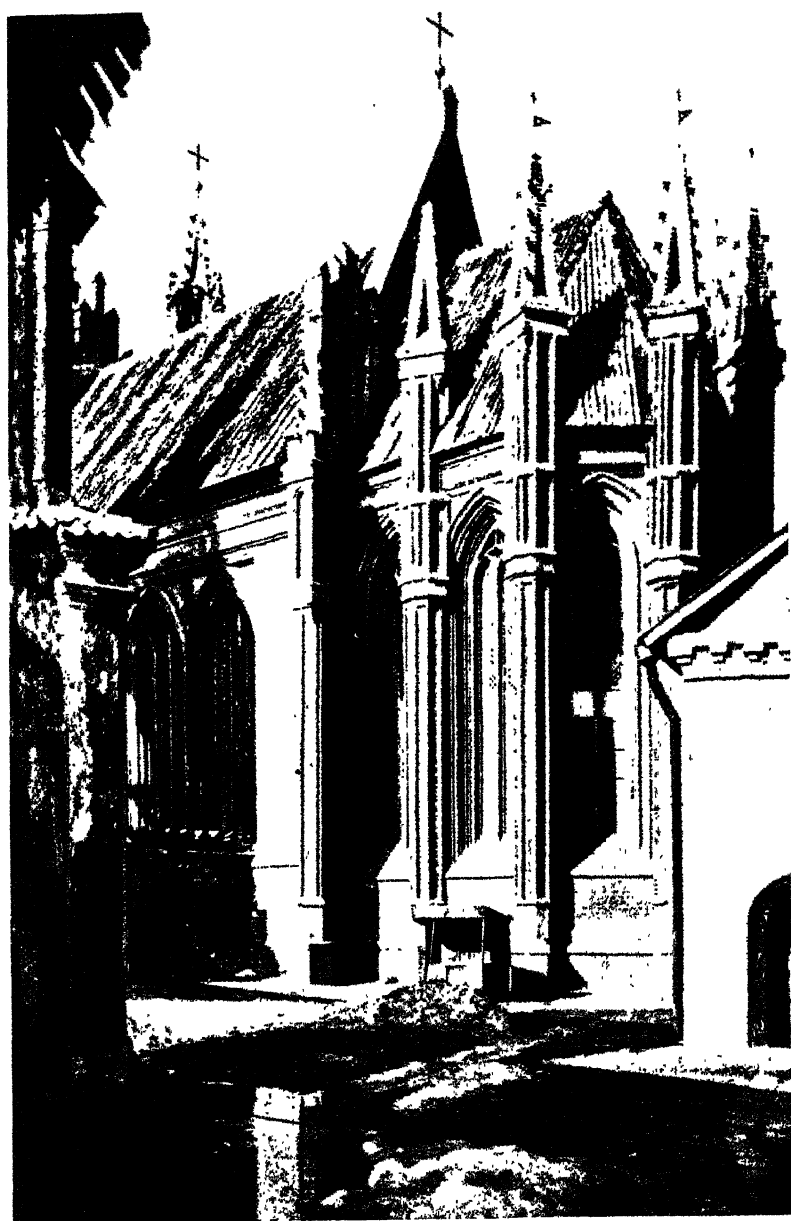


12. St. Anna Church

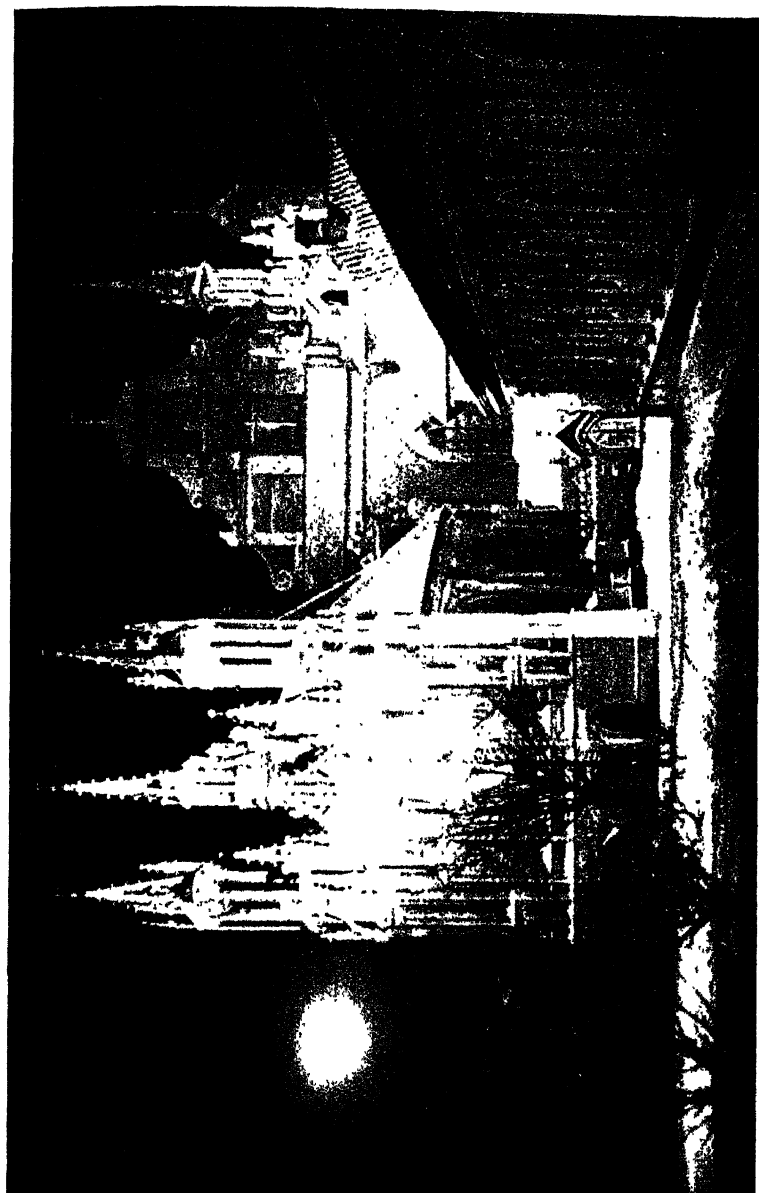
*One of the most beautiful Gothic churches in Eastern Europe
Built 16th century*

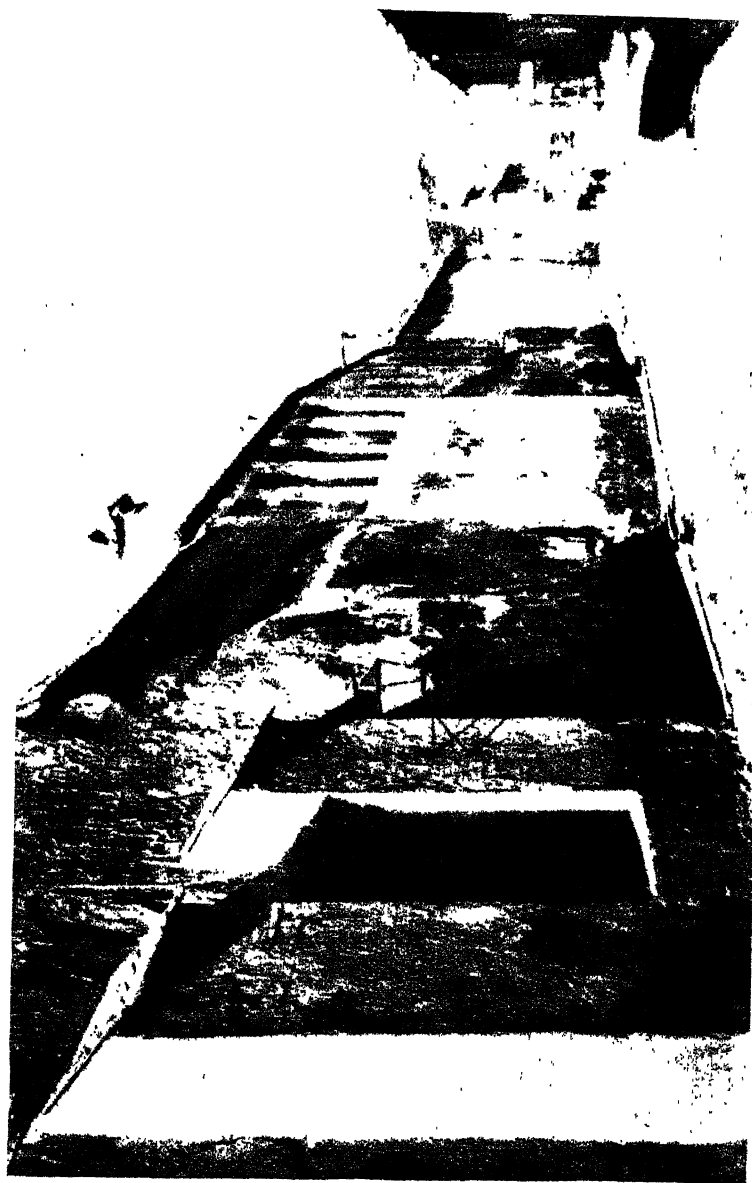


13. Eastside of St. Anna Church



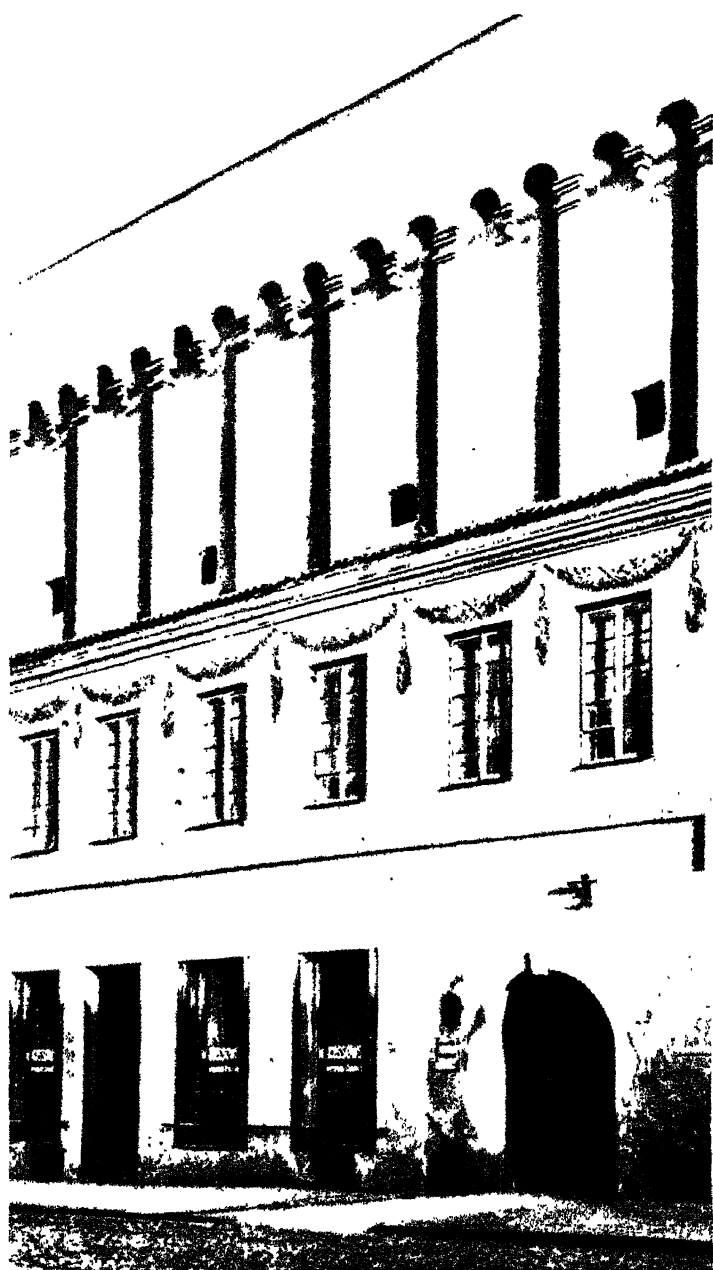
14. St. Anna and Bernardinen Churches at Night





16. An old Renaissance House in the Pilies Street

*Built 16th century with the characteristic ornaments of attic of the
Romanesque style*



17. Renaissance Tomb of Goštautas

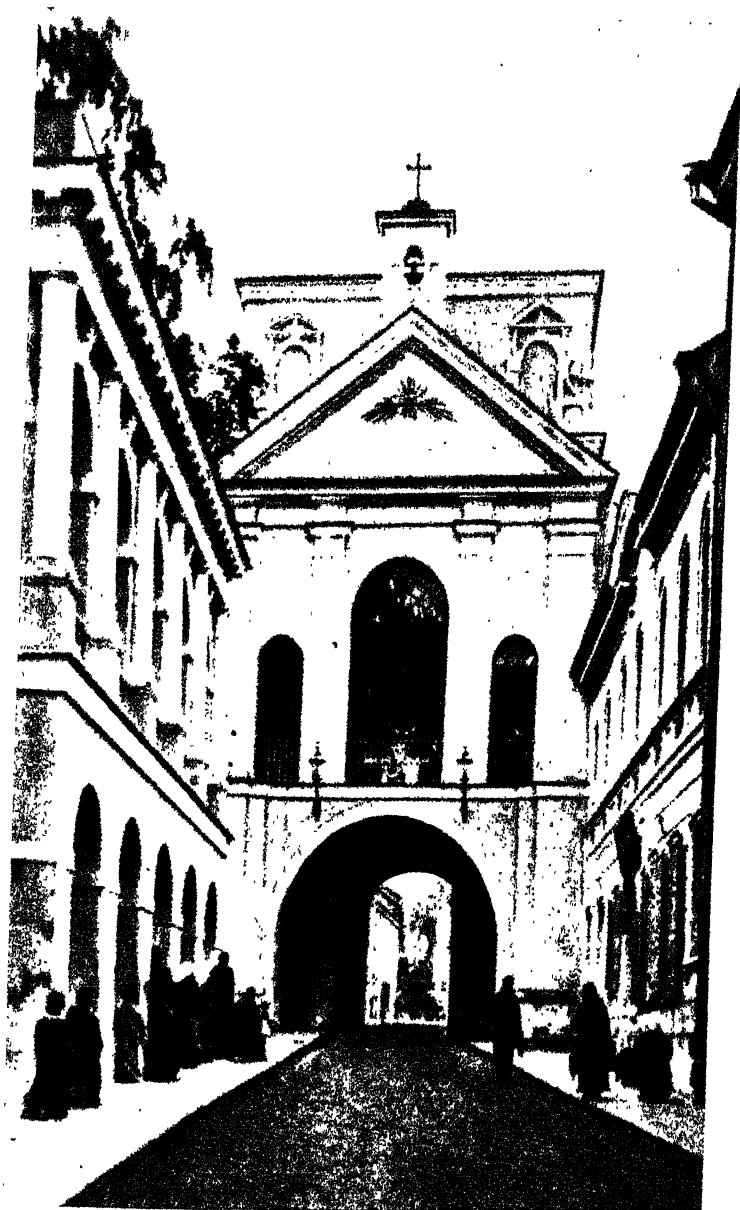
Chancellor of the Grand Duchy

Built 16th century by Giovanni Cini, sculptor of Siena



18. Aurora-Gate and Chapel

Former old City Gate 1503-1522. First wooden chapel erected 1671 and after fire in 1715 restored in 1729. Again renewed 1829 and 1927 to 1932 during the Polish occupation of Vilnius. The old Latin inscriptions were replaced by Polish ones



19. Aurora-Gate Attic
Sculptures added during late Renaissance period



20. Wonder-working Madonna

*Most important Renaissance masterwork in the Aurora-Gate Chapel
Tempera on 8 oaken boards 200 x 163 cm. Painted by unknown master
16th cent.*



21. St. Michel's Church

*Built 1594-1625 by Leonas Sapiega, Grand Chancellor and Headman
of Lithuania, Palatine of Vilnius. Much damaged by Cossacks 1665.
Restored in Baroque style 1662*



22. Interior of St. Michel's Church

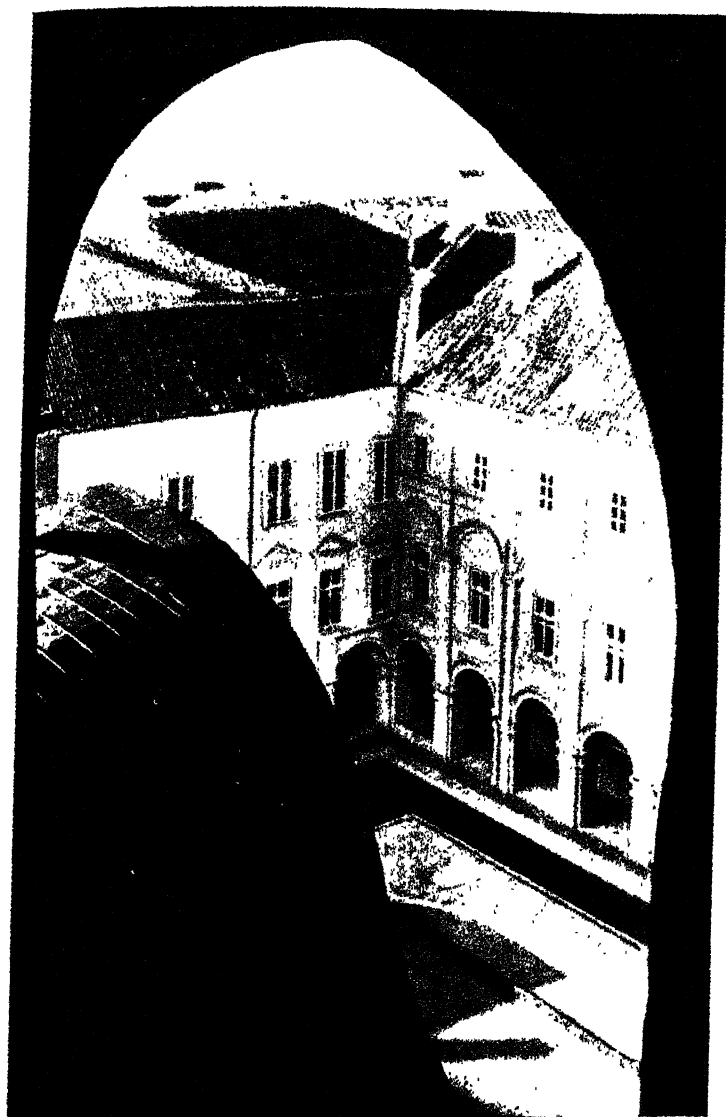




24. Bernardinen Lane



25. Large Courtyard of the Academy of Vilnius
Built 16th century by Lithuanian Jesuits



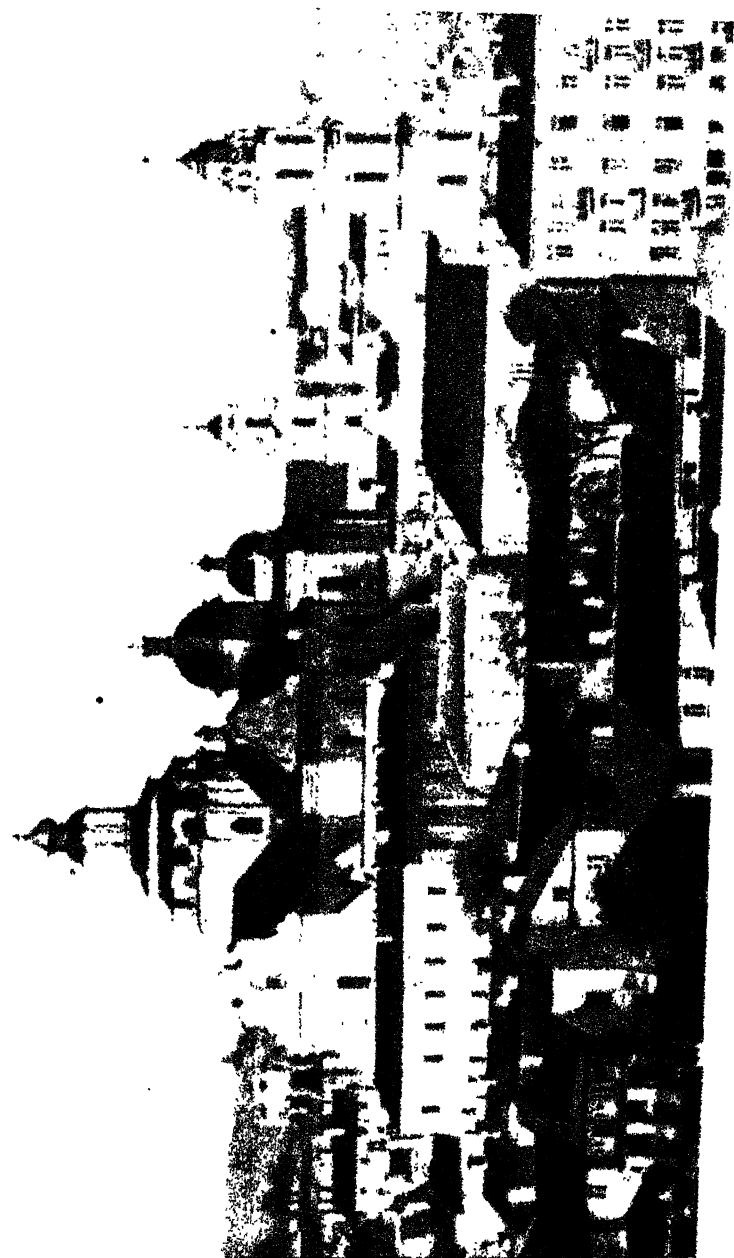
26. Bell-Tower of St. John's Church
Built 1571. To the right St. John's Church



27. St. Casimir Church

View from the Eastside

*Built 1604-1615 by Leonas Sapiega,
Grand-Chancellor and Headman of Lithuania, Palatine of Vilnius*

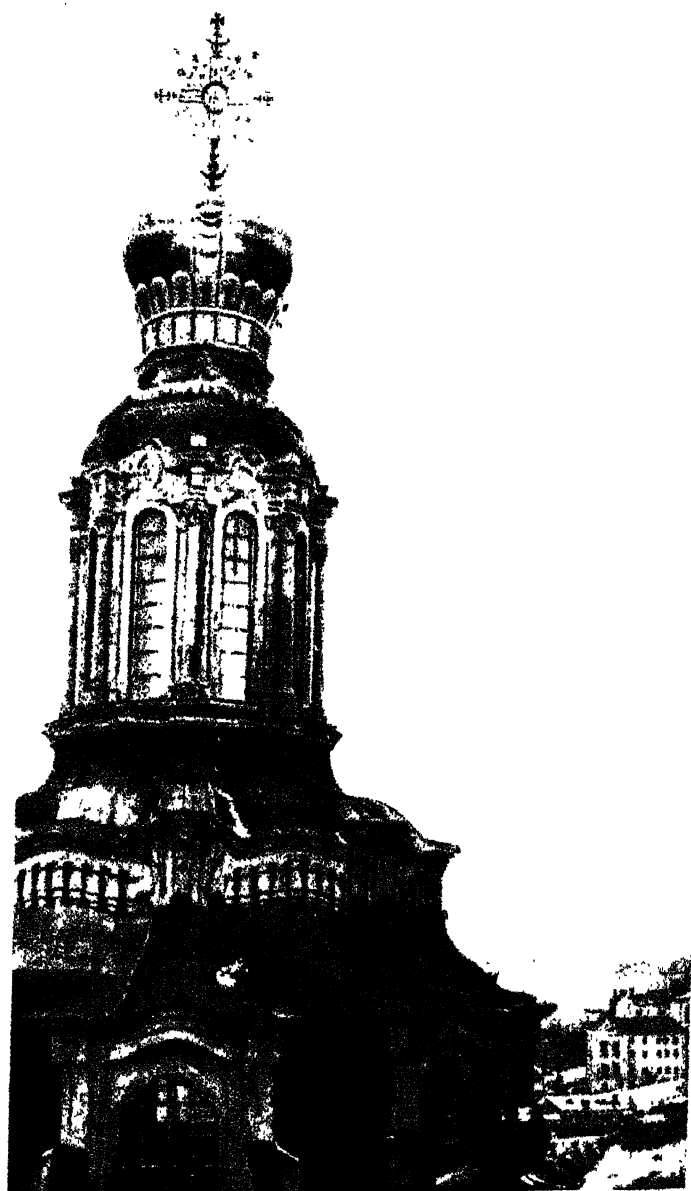


28. St. Casimir Church
Façade



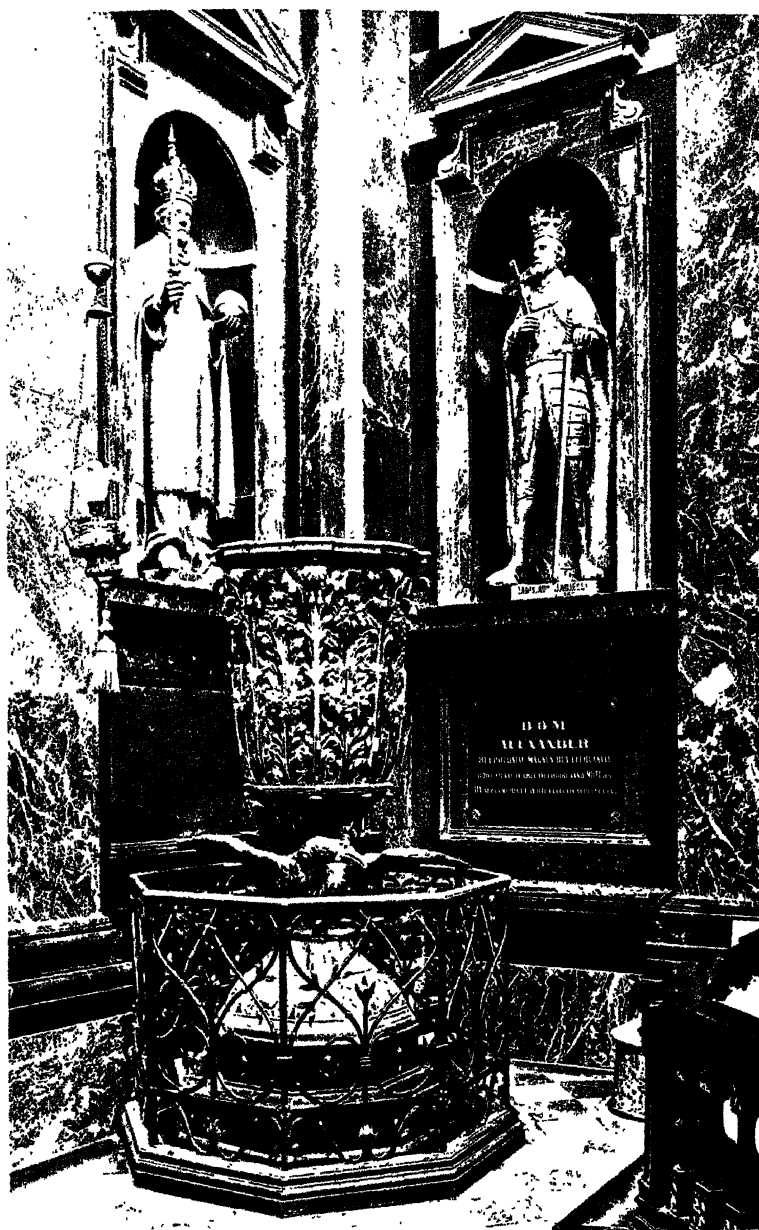
29. St. Casimir Church

*Cupola in the shape of the old grand ducal crown was removed in the year 1840 during the second Russian occupation. Rebuilt after old descriptions during 1941-1943 by architect Jonas Mulokas
Cross designed by Prof. Vytautas Žemkalnis*



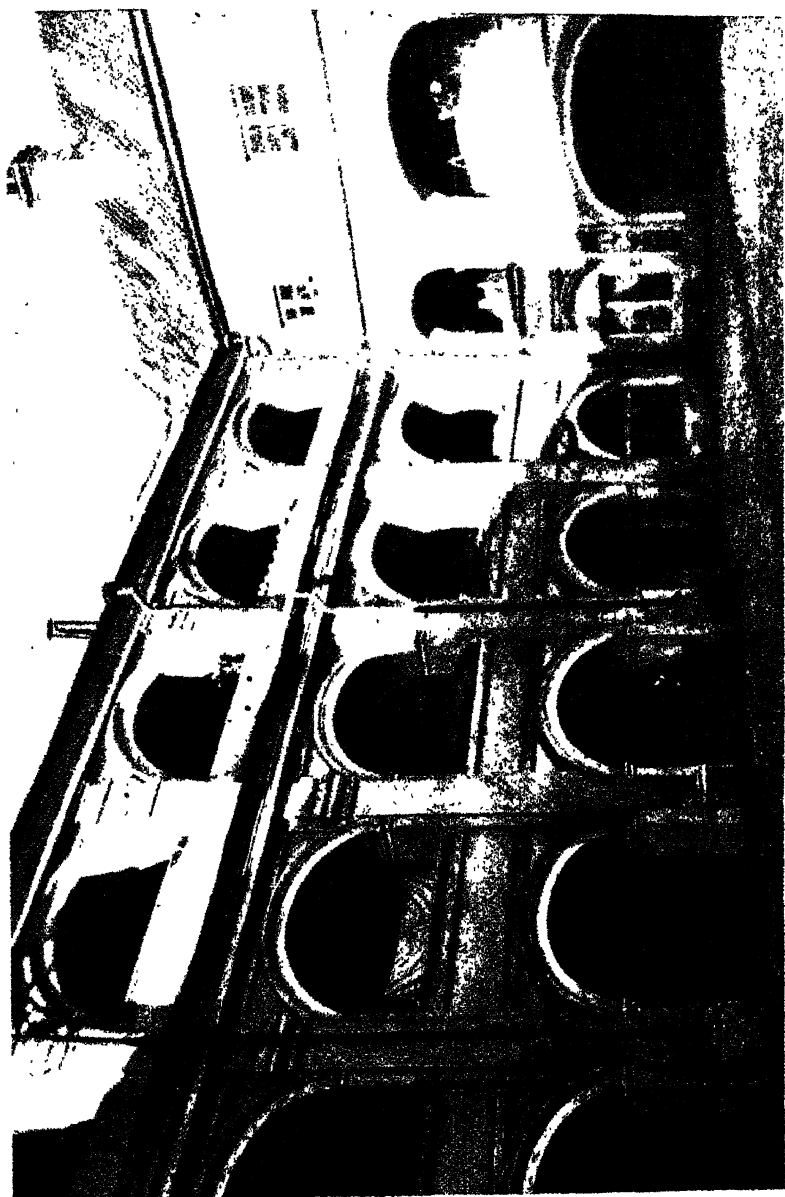
30. St. Casimir Chapel in the Cathedral

*Most outstanding monument of its time and remarkable harmony
of two different styles in the same church. Built 1620 - 1630*



1801
ALEXANDER
BORN 2ND OF MARCH 1748
DIED 26TH OF JUNE 1801
BY THE DEATH OF HIS MOTHER AND HIS FATHER
HE BECAME KING OF GREAT BRITAIN

31. Courtyard of the Bishop's Seminary
Built 17th century



32. Head of Christ, Cathedral
Ivory carving 17th century



33. St. Peter and Paul Church

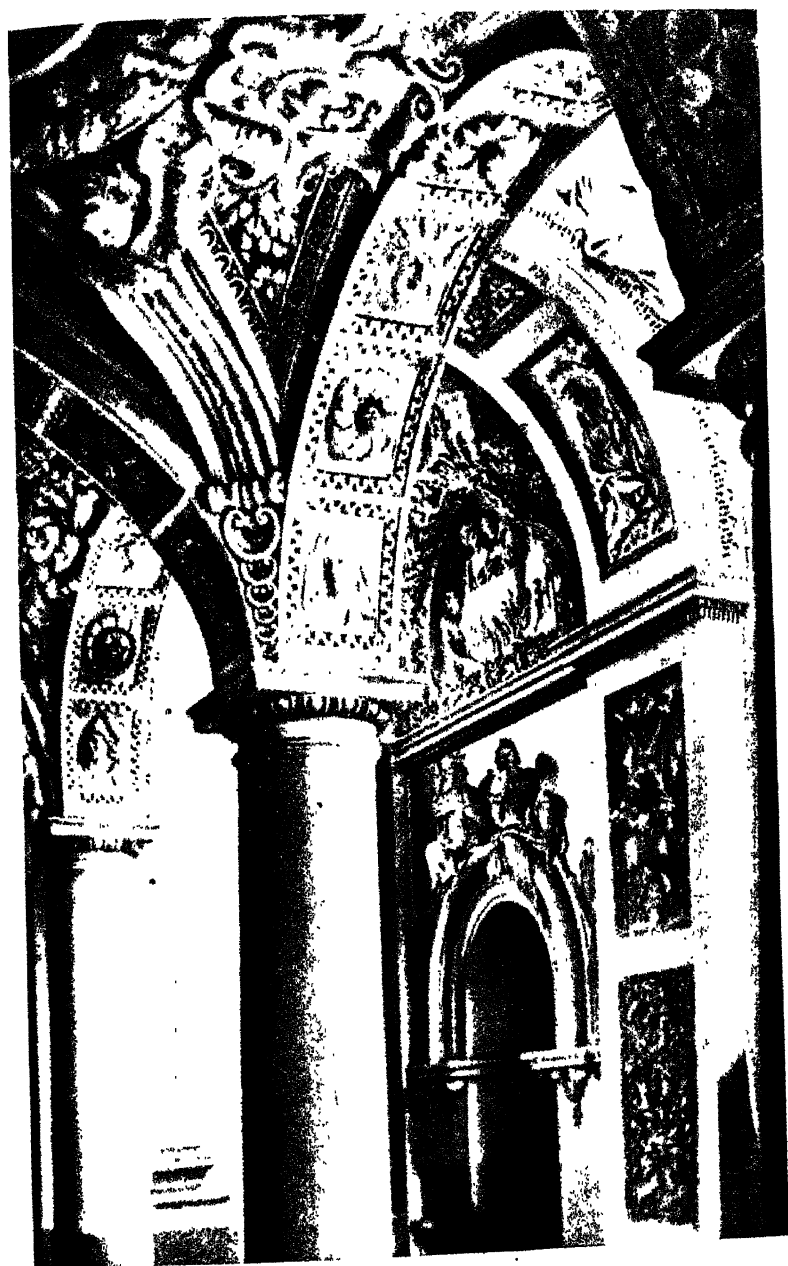
*One of the famous Baroque churches in Vilnius. Erected 1668 by
Mykolas Pacas, Headman of Lithuania and Palatine of Vilnius
Composed by Italian architect Giovanni Zaor*



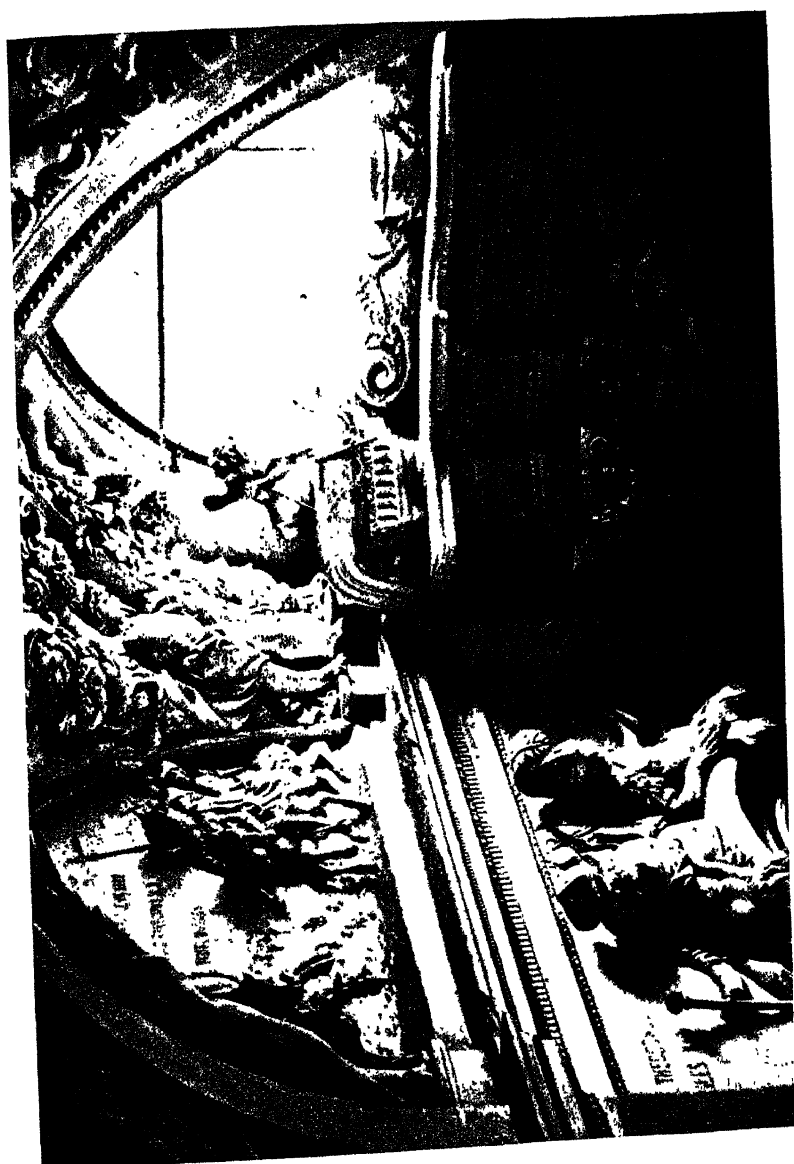
34. Interior of St. Peter and Paul Church
*Sculptures composed by Italian masters Pietro Peretti and
Giovanni Maria Galli*



35. View in St. Peter and Paul Church



36. Heroes' Chapel
St. Peter and Paul Church



37. Frieze in Naos
St. Peter and Paul Church



38. Ornament
St. Peter and Paul Church



39. Two Saints
St. Peter and Paul Church



40. Caritas
St. Peter and Paul Church



41. St. Maria Magdalena
St. Peter and Paul Church



42. St. Maria Magdalena
Part-view, St. Peter and Paul Church



42. St. Maria Magdalena
Part-view, St. Peter and Paul Church



43. St. Theresia Church

Imposing specimen of the Vilnius Baroque style

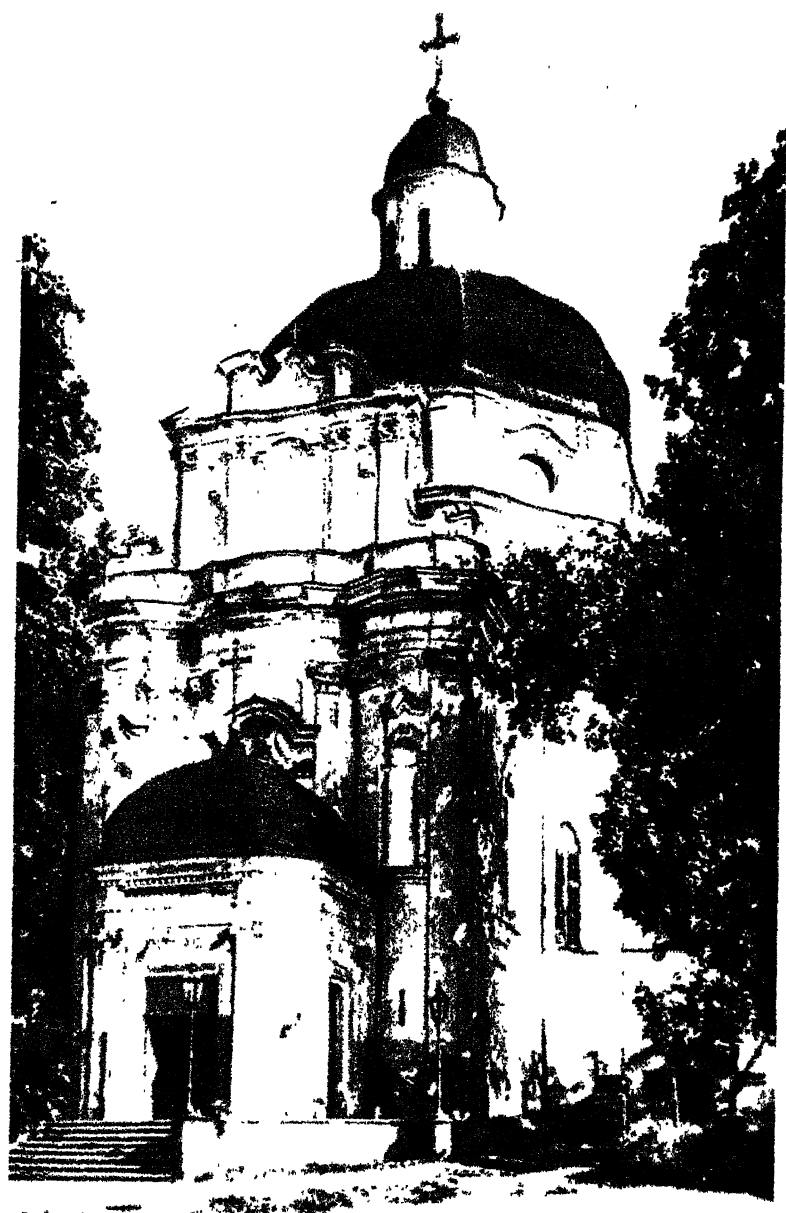
Erected about 1729 by Kristupas Pacas, Vice-Chancellor of Lithuania



44. Fine Sculptures in St. Theresia Church
Composed by Italian master Constantino Tencalli

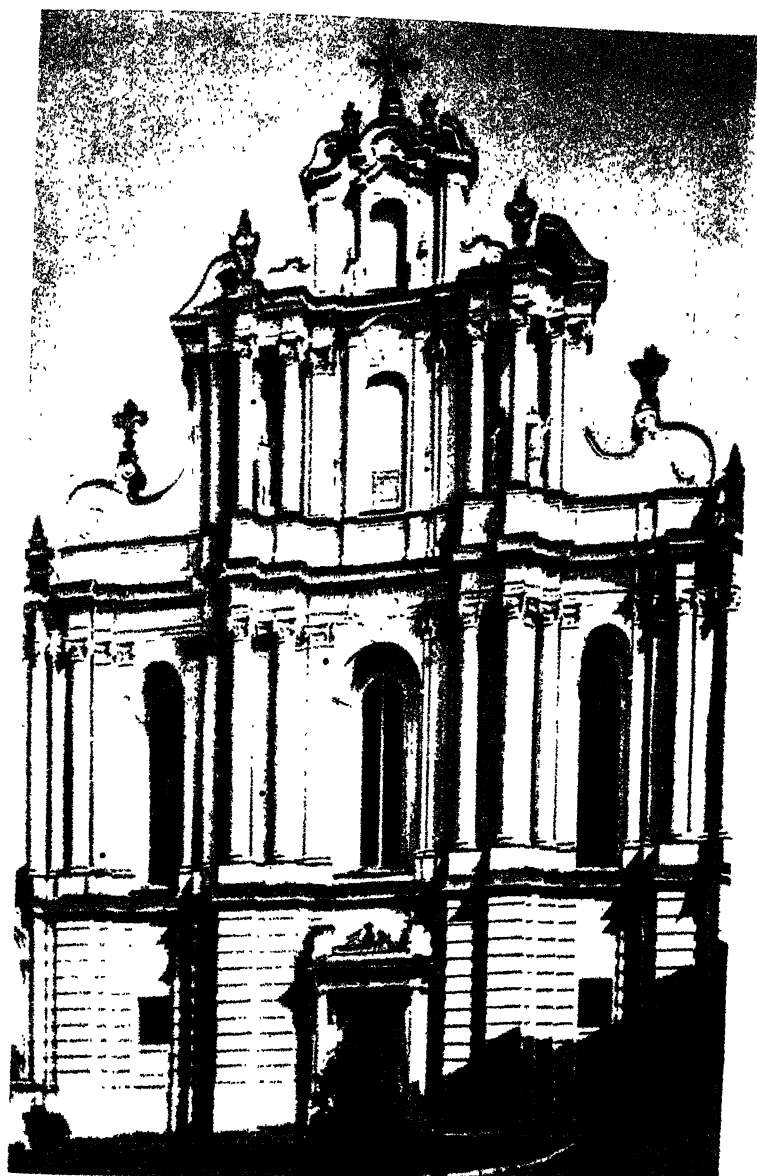


45. Sacred Heart Church
Built about 1750



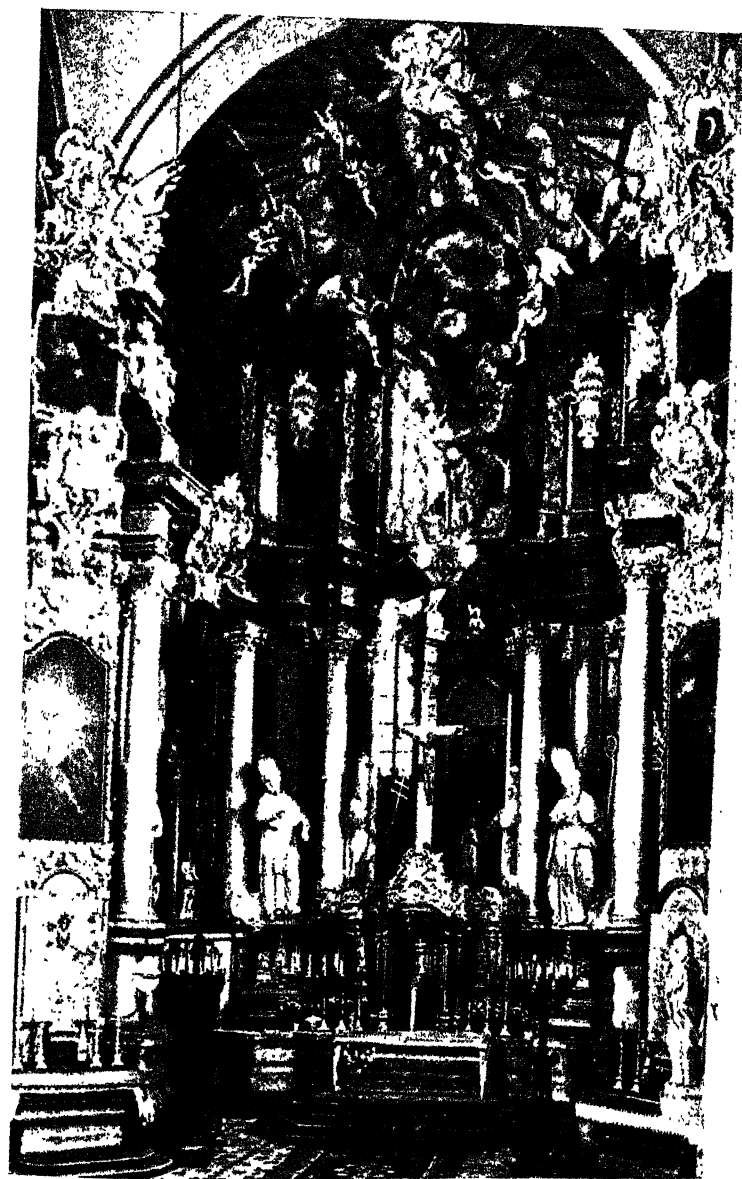
46. St. John's Church

*A wooden church, built by Vytautas the Great and Jogaila, stood here in the year 1387. After fire in 1419 restored in Gothic style about 1427
Present façade rebuilt in late Baroque style after fire in 1737*



47. Altars in St. John's Church

Rebuilt in Baroque style after fires 1737 and 1748

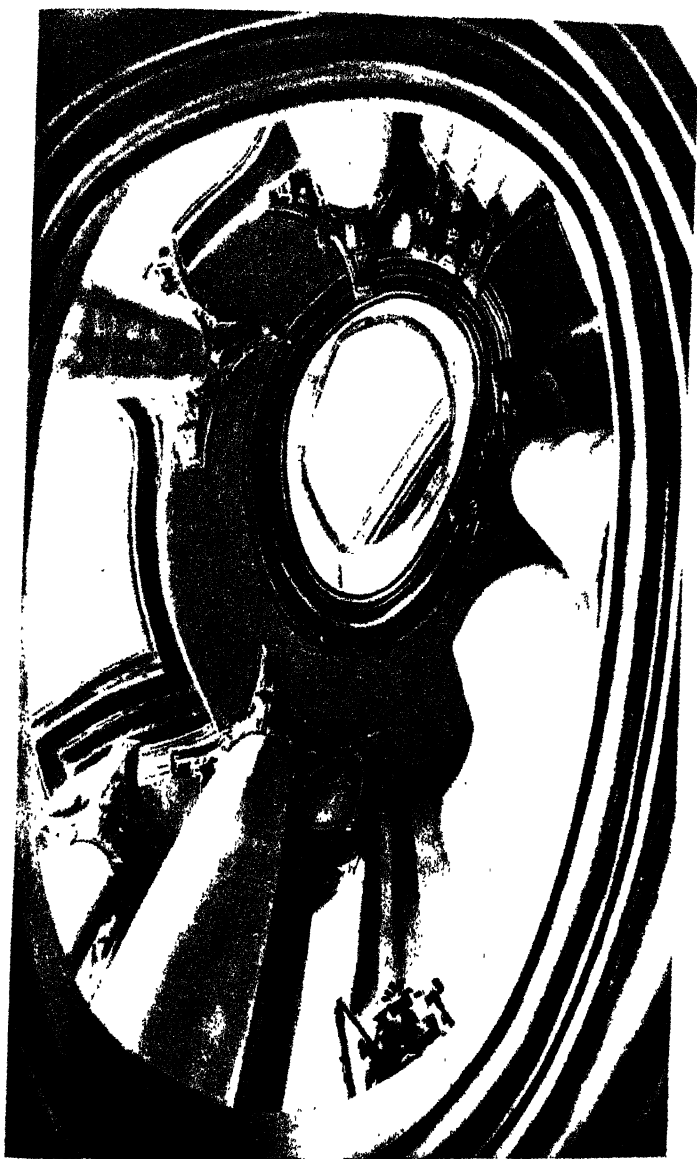


48. Interior of Dominican Church

First Dominican Church was built between 1492-1506. After fires 1610 and 1655 restored 1679-1688. Again destroyed by fire in 1737. After this fire restoration lasted until 1753



49. Dominican Church
View from the High Altar upwards



50. Basilian Gate

Finest creation of Baroque style



51. St. Catherine Church

*Erected 1698 by Jonas Feliksas Pacas, finished 1743 by architect Jonas
Kristupas Glianbicas*

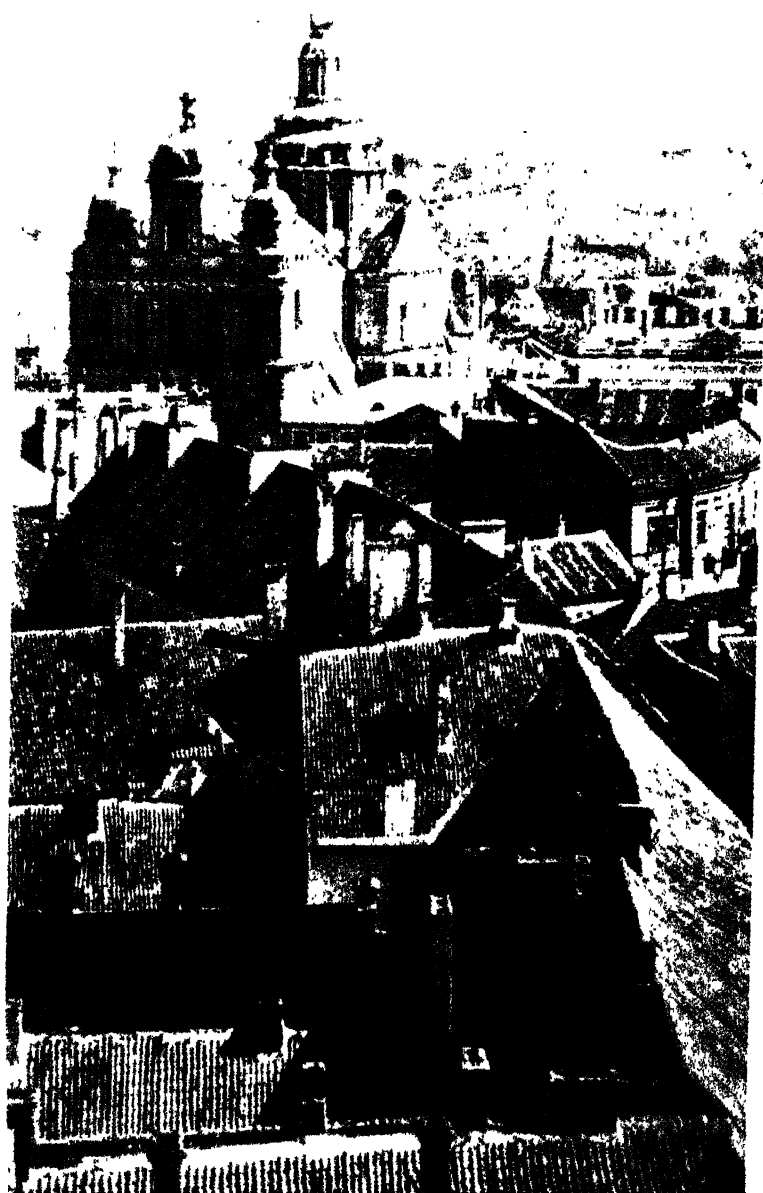


52. Missionary Church

*Special Lithuanian Baroque style Erected 1698 by Teofilus Plateris,
finished 1753*



53. View across the Roofs



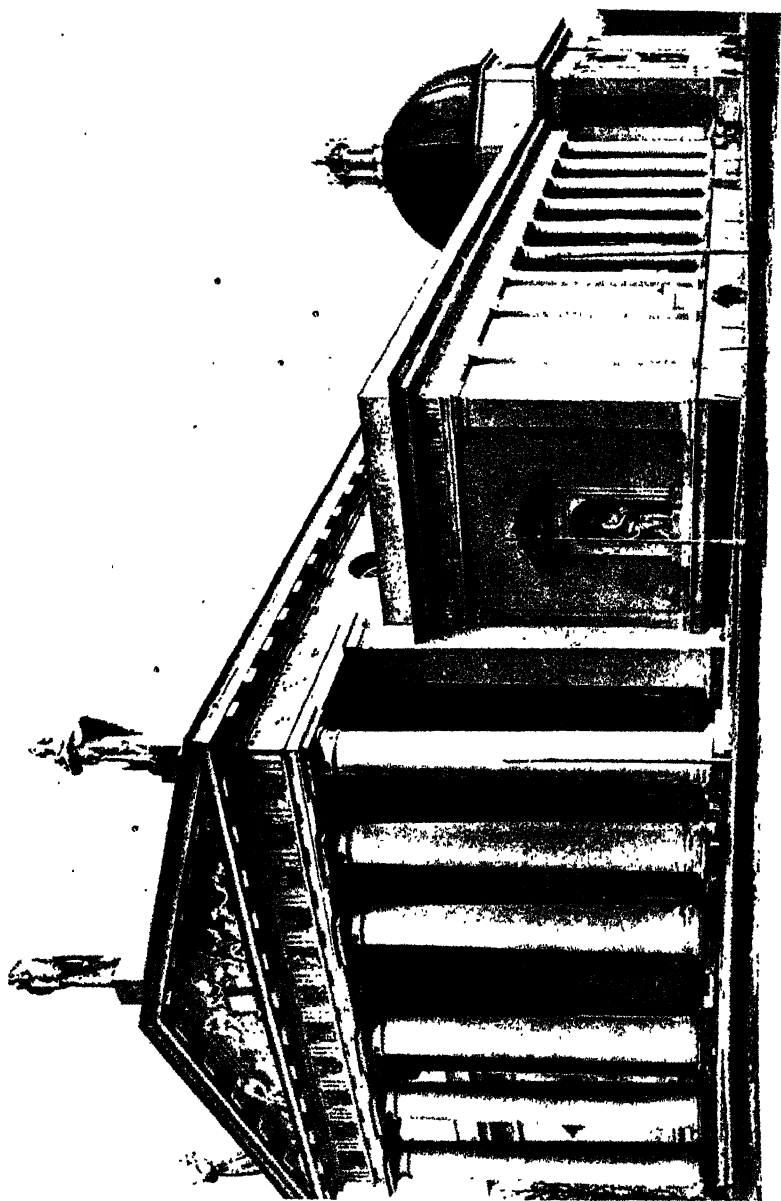
54- Old Lane



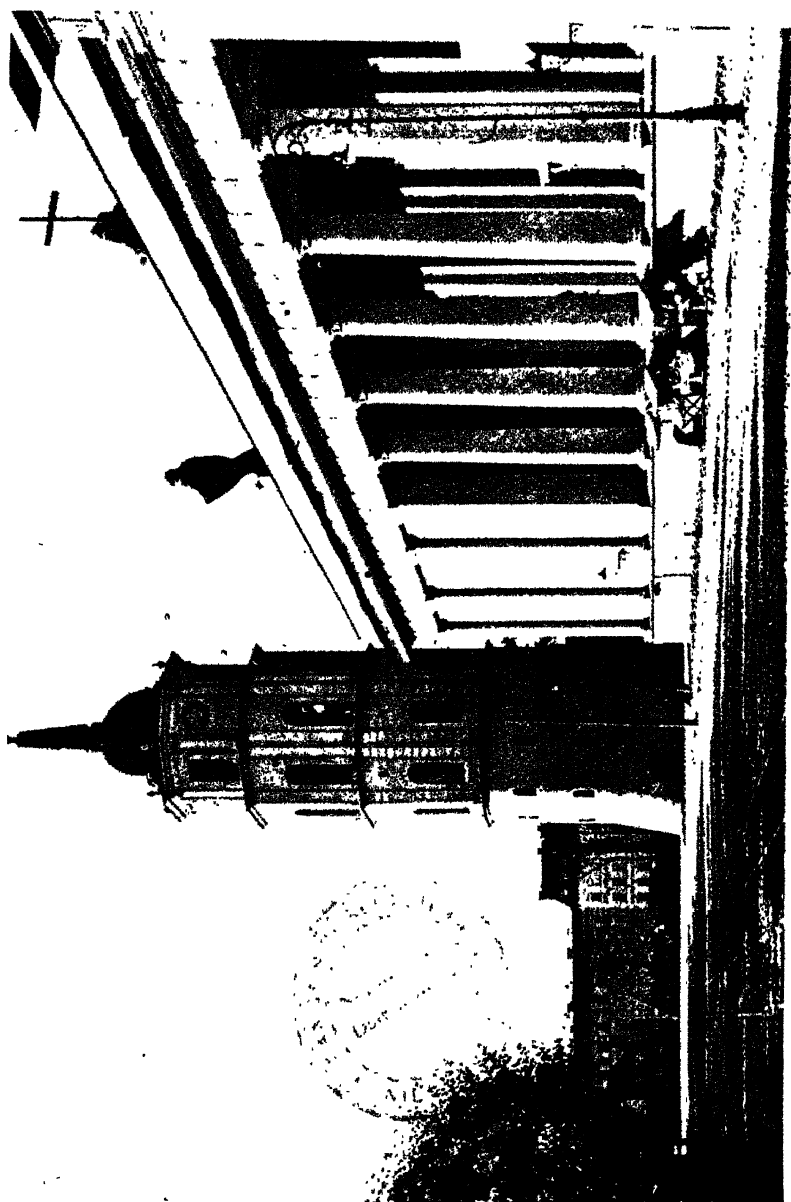


56. The Cathedral

The first cathedral was built 1387 by Grand Duke Jogaila. After fire 1419 rebuilt by Vytautas the Great. Again destroyed by fire and war 1530, 1610, 1655. In the year 1777 modernized in Classic style by the architect Laurynas Stuoka-Gucevičius under the patronage of Prince Ignas Masalskis. Sculptures by Italian master Righi. On the roof St. Stanislaus, St. Helena and St. Casimir by Prof. Šulcas



57. Bell-Tower of the Cathedral
Built on the old Grand Duke's castle (1413)

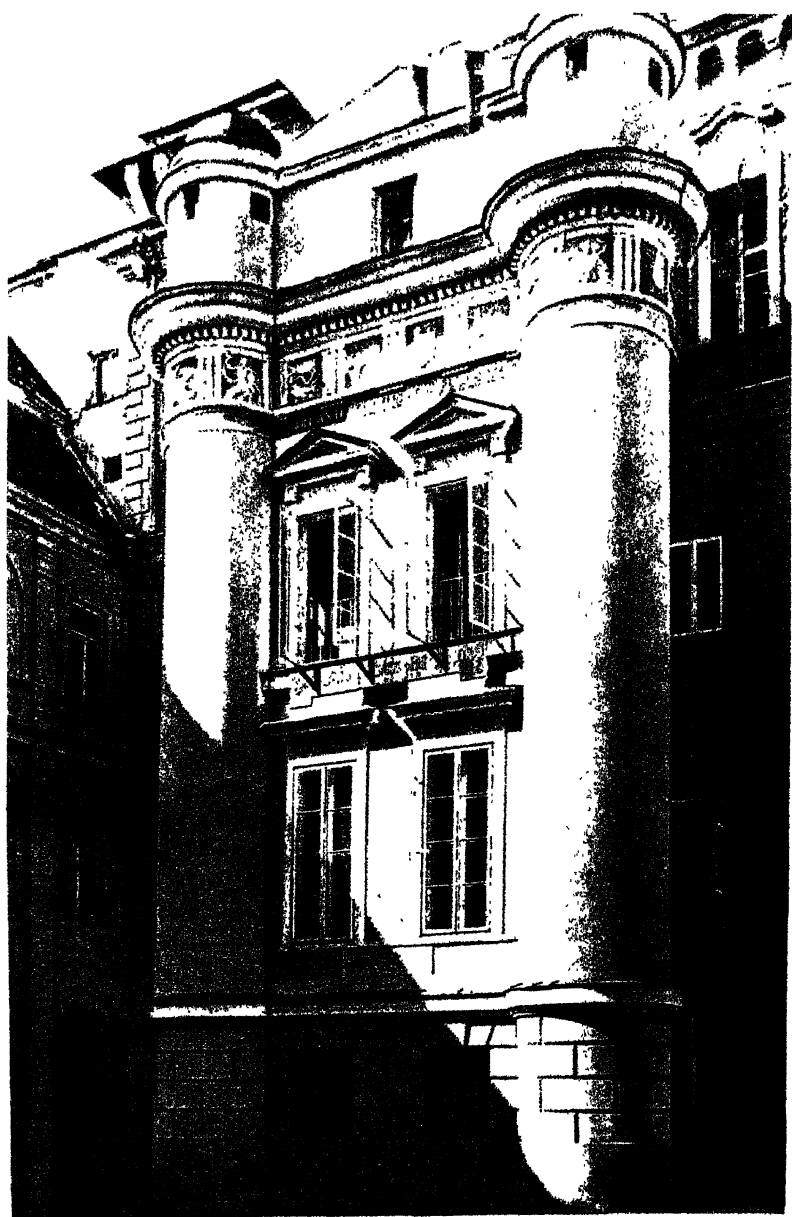


58. The new City - Hall
Erected 1777



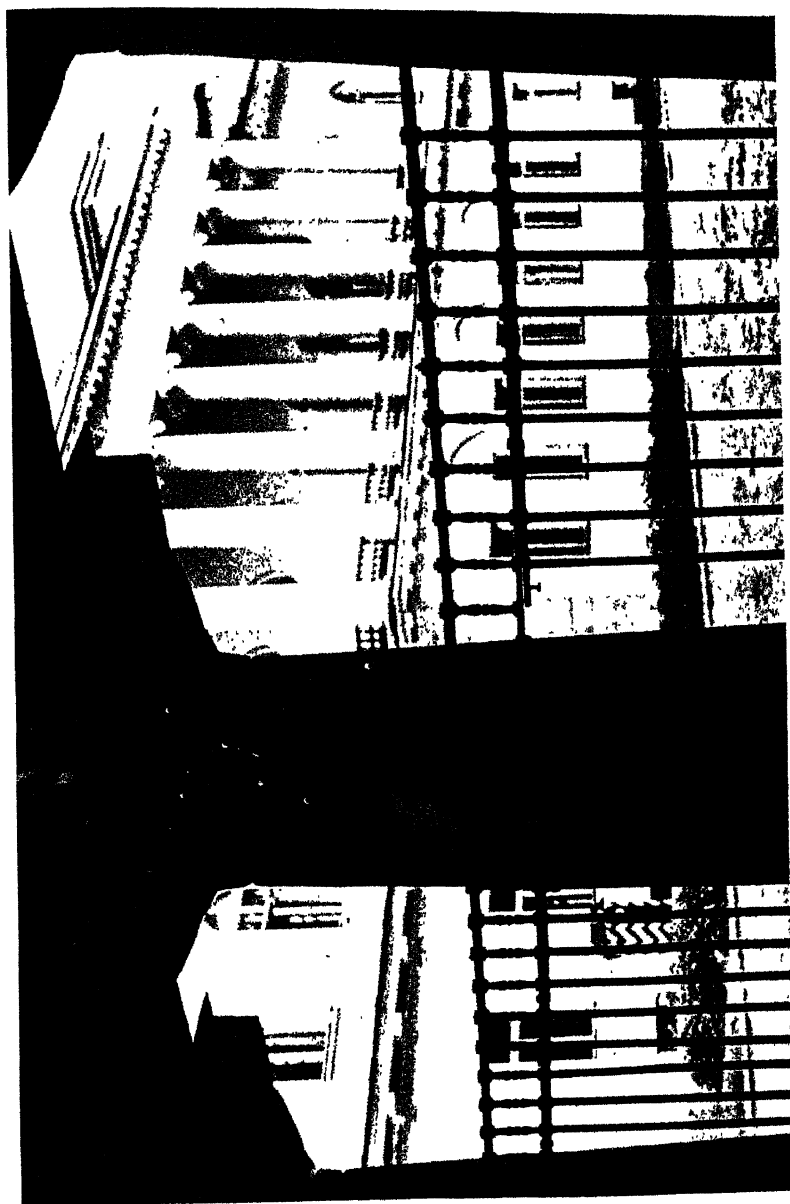
59. University, Observatory Yard

Built 16th century. Renovated 1782-1788 by Prof. Knakfusas



60. Governor's Mansion

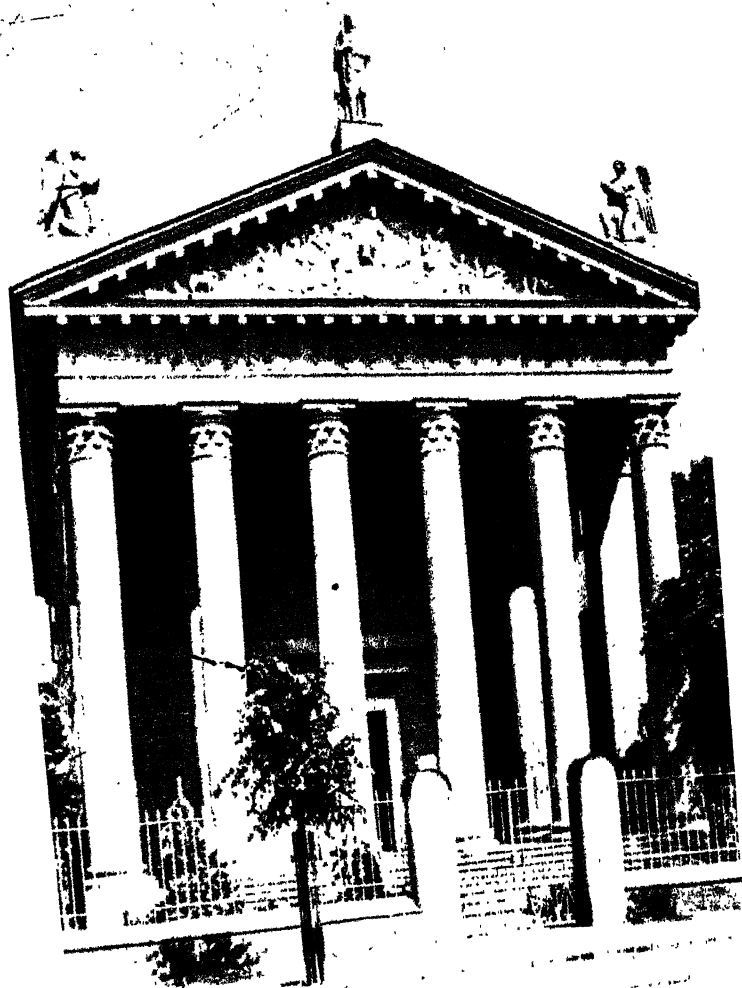
Court Façade. Built about 1828. Architect Stasov, Petersburg



61. Governor's Mansion
House of the Court Guard



62. The Reformers' Church
Built 1830 — 1835 by Prof. Podczasinski



63. A Peep through the Centuries

